

कलातत्त्वकोश

Kalātattvakośa

A LEXICON
OF FUNDAMENTAL CONCEPTS
OF THE INDIAN ARTS

VOL. I
PERVASIVE TERMS
VYĀPTI



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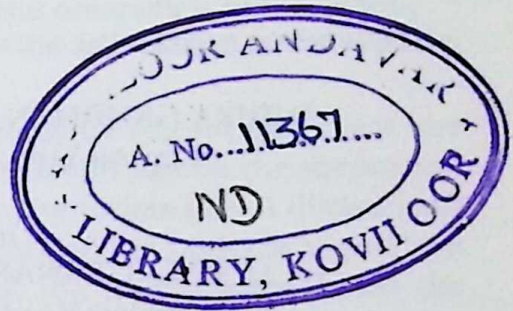
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KALĀTATTVAKOŚA VOL. - I

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VOLUME - I



Editor
Bettina Bäumer



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GENERAL EDITOR'S NOTE TO THE FIRST EDITION

प्रथमं शून्यताबोधिं द्वितीयं बीजसंग्रहम् ।
तृतीयं बिम्बनिष्पत्तिं चतुर्थन्यासमक्षरम् ॥

Hevajra Tantra I.3.2

First the void;
Second the seed;
Third the emanation of the Image;
Fourth the articulation of the syllable.

Kalākośa Division of the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts is the principal research and publication division. It concentrates on the theoretical and textual traditions of intellectual discourse in the Indian arts. A distinctively Indian inter-disciplinary system where the textual and the oral, the verbal and the visual, the scientific and the metaphysical, the transcendental and the functional were interlocked as parts of a whole is recognised, but its concepts, structure and processes are often difficult to identify. The Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts aims to comprehend the arts within the context of the Indian world view, notions of space-time and interconnections, at the level of theory and practice.

Emerging logically out of this perception are the four long-range programmes of this division, namely (i) Kalātattvakośa – A Lexicon of Fundamental Concepts and Glossaries of technical terms; (ii) Kalāmūlāsāstra – Series of Fundamental Texts basic to the Indian artistic traditions and also primary texts specific to particular arts; (iii) Publications, reprints, translations of works of critical scholarship such as those of A.K. Coomaraswamy; (iv) Encyclopaedia of the Arts – A multi-disciplinary, multi-volume Encyclopaedia of the Arts.

The Kalātattvakośa is the first of these programmes, complex, intricate in nature, but essential as a first prerequisite to identify fundamentals of a rare holistic system.

Guided by the above motto, the present volume is a first attempt at exploring the 'essence' and blossoming of some fundamental concepts. Amongst the eight terms chosen for this volume, some are pervasive; they permeate all disciplines, are inter-connected with each other as indicators of the micro-macro dimensions. These constitute the foundation of complex structures which emerge in diverse disciplines ranging from biology, medicine, to mathematics and metaphysics and govern aesthetic theories and artistic expressions. Others such as *lakṣaṇa* and *śilpa* indicate process and manifestation at the level of form.

The essays presented seek to make manifest the multilayered meaning, connotation and usage of these concepts. The plan for the future is to take up concepts of space-time, the primal elements and categories of form. Responses to the approach and presentation from savants and specialists will facilitate refinement of presentation in the future.

No task of this kind, in this age of specialisation, can be accomplished without the dedicated active cooperation of many scholars and specialists who have devoted a lifetime to single disciplines. Their collaboration was essential: others undertook the difficult task of sifting and resynthesis. Details of the methodology of the evolution of this volume are outlined in the introduction by Dr. Bettina Bäumer, Honorary Coordinator of the project and Editor of the volume.

The Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts is grateful to the enthusiastic and willing cooperation of all scholars who shared the vision and the commitment to bring together material scattered in texts covering a span of nearly 1500 years in diverse disciplines. Dr. Bettina Bäumer has acknowledged thanks to them all. Tarkatirtha Lakshman Shastri Joshi has to be singled out for special thanks; his monumental scholarship, perspicacity and wisdom has been an inspiration. To Dr. Bettina Bäumer, Hony. Coordinator of the Kalātattvakośa programme, the IGNCA is grateful for providing a sincere and clear sighted academic leadership to this team, as also to Rev. S. Rinpoche of the Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies, Sarnath for support, administrative and moral; and to the Alice Boner Foundation, Varanāsi.

To the staff of the IGNCA, its eminent Consultants and Research Officers, editorial staff, no formal thanks can be adequate, for these will be the challenging tasks of perseverance and exactness of their present and future work.

Kapila Vatsyayan

New Delhi
10.11.88

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PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

This first Volume of Kalātattvakośa has been out of print for some years and there has been a great demand for its revised edition. Meanwhile Volume II on **Concepts of Space and Time** has come out in 1992, Volume III on **Primal Elements – Mahābhūta** in 1996 and Volume IV on **Manifestation of Nature – Śrṣṭi-vistāra** in 1999. In these volumes the methodology and context of the articles has been improved and enlarged so as to set a format for the entire series. But due to the specific nature of the first volume it has not been possible to revise it in complete uniformity with the following volumes.

While revising this volume our aim was mainly to eliminate factual errors and printing mistakes. The selection of terms has not been changed. However, the volume has been given the title: **Pervasive Terms – Vyāpti** which remained a desideratum in the previous edition. Uniformity with the series has also been achieved with regard to bibliography and index which add to the usefulness of this Lexicon.

The positive response to the first four volumes of Kalātattvakośa has been a great encouragement and confirmation that this series is fulfilling a unique and necessary task. It has been stressed repeatedly by readers and reviewers that the articles do not only throw light on the connection of the Indian Arts with other fields of knowledge, but that they actually present an insight into Indian culture as a whole, based on fundamental concepts. Hence the Lexicon is useful for students and teachers as a source of textual material and for any reader interested in Indian culture, providing the basic insights of the Indian traditions and arts.

In such an ambitious enterprise shortcomings are unavoidable. The articles presented in this volume have certainly not covered all the aspects, schools and approaches of such fundamental terms. But they can serve as source material and starting points for a more comprehensive understanding of these concepts.

The reader is referred to the Introductions to Vols II, III and IV for a more detailed description of the general approach and methodology of the Lexicon.

I thankfully acknowledge the assistance of the coordinator, Dr. R.C. Sharma, Prof. V.N. Misra, academic adviser and of the staff of the Varanasi office who have carefully revised the book: Dr. S. Chattopadhyay, Dr. N.C. Panda, Dr. Pranati Ghosal, and Sri Gautam Kumar Chatterjee has efficiently composed the text in the computer. I also thank Dr. Advaitavadini Kaul and Dr. R. Sathyanarayana for their suggestions.

Bettina Bäumer

Varanasi
Kārttika Pūrṇimā
November, 1999

INTRODUCTION TO THE FIRST EDITION

ऋचां त्वः पोषमास्ते पुपुष्वान् गायत्रं त्वो गायति शक्करीषु ।
ब्रह्मा त्वो वदति जातविद्यां यज्ञस्य मात्रां वि मिमीत उ त्वः ॥

Rgveda X.71.11

**One Man with utmost care creates the verses,
another sings a song in chanted meters.
A third, the Brahmin, tells forth the wisdom of being,
while yet a fourth prescribes the rules of sacrifice.**

The Indian arts, both in theory (*śāstra*) and practice (*prayoga*), are branches of a single living tree of Indian culture. They cannot be understood in isolation from other dimensions of thought and science, myth and ritual, spiritual and secular traditions. The underlying world-view has crystallized in certain concepts, reflecting the understanding of cosmos and man, of space and time, of form and structure, of the part and the whole, of body, senses and mind. So far, most indological and art-historical research has been done in single disciplines or in limited historical periods, but a serious investigation into the inter-relatedness of all these fields is still a desideratum. An interdisciplinary approach is the first prerequisite to understanding the relationship between the ancient sciences (e.g. Āyurveda, Jyotiṣa), philosophy, and the various branches of the arts.

The *Indira Gandhi Kalā Kośa* is committed to exploring these fundamental concepts which reflect a holistic vision, typical of the Indian world-view, but whose survival is today threatened by narrow specialization. This is the outcome of a certain concept of the modern sciences that is generally held, but which is already being questioned by the latest insights in, e.g. physics, biology, and medicine. A reflection on these basic concepts of India's rich intellectual and artistic heritage may also contribute to an integration between ancient and modern ways of life and thought, so essential today both for India and the West.

The *Kalātattvakośa* or *Lexicon of Fundamental Concepts of the Indian Arts* aims at throwing light on the basic concepts contained in the different disciplines. The approach thus differs from technical glossaries of separate disciplines or text-groups (e.g. the terminological Glossaries of Sanskrit begun by L. Renou

which remained incomplete)¹, assuming that in most cases there is an inner link and a deeper reason for the same concept being used in different branches of the Indian tradition. For example, the concept of *rasa* has a chemical and physiological meaning in *Rasaśāstra* and *Āyurveda*, which is not without an inner relation with the aesthetical concept of *rasa* as “aesthetic flavour”. Each concept has its own life and history which has evolved even up to the modern Indian languages, giving a particular ‘colour’ and ‘flavour’ to each cultural expression. All the dimensions and levels of these concepts have to be explored before we can discover their manifestation and usage in the various arts. The intention of the *Lexicon* is not to force any scheme of interpretation on these concepts, either of unity or of diversity, but to present the original textual material in a way which will make visible the underlying connection. In some cases the inner link may be obvious, in others it can be inferred, or it may stimulate further research.

The following method has been adopted for this *Lexicon*: In the first stage a list of about 250 Sanskrit terms has been prepared in consultation with several scholars. The criteria of selection depended upon their multidisciplinary nature, i.e. only such terms were selected which occur in at least two or three different fields (e.g. *Veda*, *Tantra*, *Āyurveda*), and which also appear in one or the other branches of the arts. These terms have been grouped in broad conceptual categories, such as space-time, form, elements, creative process, as well as pervasive terms (*vyāpaka*), the part and the whole. This categorization helps in clarifying some basic ideas underlying the Indian world-view, and their connection with the arts.

The next step consisted in selecting the most important texts (originally 108, then 276) in Sanskrit, to a limited extent also in Pali and Prakrit, from which quotations/references were to be extracted (see **Abbreviations** and **Bibliography**). These references have been collected on cards by pandits and scholars, containing the term in question, the text, the quotation in Sanskrit, Pali, etc., its translation and notes. These cards have also been fed into the computer, and cards on a particular term are given to the scholar writing the respective article.

The articles on the terms, written on the basis of the cards and supplemented by research done by the author of the article, do not pretend to give a complete history of the concept, which would not be possible at the present stage of indological research. However, they can show the stages through which a concept has travelled, from the Vedas with their ramifications in the speculative, physical, ritual and mythological-narrative fields, from Buddhist and Jaina

1. Renou, Louis, *Vocabulaire du Rituel Védique*. Paris (Librarie C. Klincksieck), 1945 (Collection de vocabulaires techniques du Sanskrit). For other examples of technical glossaries, cf. E. Gerow, *A Glossary of Indian Figures of Speech*. The Hague, Paris (Mouton), 1971; G. Liebert, *Iconographic Dictionary of the Indian Religions*. Leiden (Brill), 1976 (Indian reprint, 1986).

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sources, through the Vedāṅgas or ancient sciences, the various Śāstras, Purāṇas, Tantras, Darśanas, etc., till its crystallization in the different arts. The relation between the conceptual background and the manifestation in the arts is the main focus of the articles. The arts occupy an intermediate position and hence mediate between metaphysics and physics, between spirituality and science. E.g. a Hindu temple represents a whole metaphysical conception, and at the same time its building requires the science and technology of architecture and engineering. An interdisciplinary approach is indispensable.

As for possible schemes of interpretation, which may be obvious or implicit, the Indian tradition itself offers sufficient categories and we try not to impose foreign categories. As far as the holistic approach is concerned, the Philosophic dictum: *sarvaṃ sarvātmakam* – YSūBh III.14, “everything is related to the totality” (or “every detail is related to the whole”) can serve as a kind of magic key to these concepts. The various schemes of two or three levels of understanding reality can be applied here: the Vedic division in *adhibhūta* (physical), *adhidaiva* (divine, cosmic) and *adhyātma* (human, spiritual); the pervasive conception of the three dimensions of *sthūla* (gross, physical), *sūkṣma* (subtle, psychic) and *para* (transcendent); the differentiation in manifest and unmanifest (*vyakta*, *avyakta* and *vyaktāvyakta*, the state in between), and others can serve as a hermeneutical basis. Depending on the concept, the starting point may be physical/scientific or metaphysical/conceptual, but the other dimensions can never be excluded, so that a one-sided interpretation will be avoided.

The holistic approach has to be complemented by the specificity of the concept, its *svarūpa* or self-identity. In spite of the tendency of Sanskrit texts to identify and correlate words, there is a clear identity of each term, and even the so-called synonyms have each a life and meaning of their own. For example, the implications of *śarīra*, *tanu*, *deha*, *vāyu*, all denoting the body, are different.

Though general guide-lines for writing the articles have been evolved, there remains the necessary flexibility depending on the nature of each term. The general scheme of the articles includes:

Overview

Etymology and Related Terms

Layers of Meaning

Development of the Concept

Manifestation in the Arts

Classification

Process

Conclusion

The *Lexicon* will later be supplemented by technical glossaries of terminologies of various branches of the arts, terminologies which are almost totally absent

from dictionaries of Sanskrit. Both, the *Lexicon of Fundamental Concepts* as well as the glossaries are closely related to the Series of Fundamental Texts (*Kalāmūlāsāstra*), presenting the texts on the arts.

At the present stage only eight fundamental concepts are being presented in this tentative first volume. These terms neither follow alphabetical order nor do they belong to a single group, but they represent different categories and can thus illustrate different levels of meaning. The terms *brahman*, *puruṣa* and *ātman* are almost all-pervading in Indian culture and thought, and in spite of their apparent abstractness, they have greatly influenced the theory and practice of the arts. These three concepts, so to say, belong to the supreme or transcendent level (*para*). Passing from the inner or abstract to the outer or concrete stands *śarīra*, the body in all its gross and subtle dimensions. The first mediator between the metaphysical and the physical is *prāṇa*, life and breath, the vital energy. So also *bīja*, the seed of vegetal, animal and human life, occupies an intermediate position, having both a physical and a symbolical, even mystical, meaning (*parāpara*). Coming down to the expression in external forms (*apara* level), the first step is the characteristic feature, the sign by which we recognize and identify an object: *lakṣaṇa*. The external manifestation of abstract or symbolical ideas is the work of art which combines the idea with a form, and which involves skill in treating a material: *śilpa*. The creation of a beautiful form cannot be separated from its creator, hence *śilpin*, the artist/artisan and the qualities he incorporates, has also to be treated along with his art.

These are the eight terms contained in this first volume. The treatment of these terms may still be discussed and suggestions from scholars are invited, so that the subsequent volumes may improve in method and presentation. The *Lexicon* should become both an instrument of reference for the scholar and artist and a mine of information for any reader interested in Indian culture.

Any work of this kind is the outcome of collaboration, and we have been fortunate to get the advice and cooperation of great scholars and pandits.

We are specially thankful to those whose vision and advice has helped us in preparing the list of terms and texts, as well as the methodology adopted, amongst whom we would like to mention Professor Lakshman Shastri Joshi, Professor Prem Lata Sharma, Professor Vidya Niwas Misra, Professor Kamalesh Datta Tripathi, Dr. Ram Shankar Bhattacharya, Professor M.A. Dhaky and Dr. C.R. Swaminathan. At the stage of executing the work, Pandit H.N. Chakravarty has been a great support, and the project assistants Dr. Sushma Pandey and Dr. Sukumar Chattopadhyay, as well as the typist P.K. Chatterjee have been very helpful. We also acknowledge the help of Dr. Usha Bansal in the preparation of the bibliography and of Dr. C.B. Pandey in the last stage of publication. Anjan Chakrabarty and Rajan Khosa have contributed the illustrations, and K. Khosa

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the cover design. Mrs. Irene Ray has given the finishing touch to the English editing. We are thankful to all of them.

We also want to express our gratitude to the Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies, Sarnath (Varanasi) and to its Director, Professor Samdhong Rinpoche, for their continued administrative support, as well as to the Alice Boner Foundation for allowing me to do this work and for using its office and library.

Finally, Dr. Kapila Vatsyayan has been the inspiring force behind this project, and we hope that while continuing it we shall come closer to the ideal that she has in mind.

Varanasi

October, 1988

Bettina Bäumer

Hony. Coordinator

ABBREVIATIONS

General principles in forming abbreviations, concerning the last part of the title:

Ā	Āgama
Ār	Āraṇyaka
Bh	Bhāṣya
Br	Brāhmaṇa
Ca	Carita
Dh	Dharma (e.g. DhŚ Dharmaśāstra)
G	Gītā
H	Hṛdaya
Ins	Inscription
Kā	Kārikā
Ko	Kośa
L	Lakṣaṇa
Nik	Nikāya
P	Paddhati
Prad	Pradīpikā
Prak	Prakāśa
Prāt	Prātiśākhya
Pur	Purāṇa
R	Ratnākara
Sam	Samhitā
Samu	Samuccaya
Saṅg	Saṅgraha
Sā	Sāra
Ś	Śāstra
Sm	Smṛti
Sū	Sūtra
T	Tantra
Tī	Tīkā
Up	Upaniṣad
Vā	Vārttika
V	Veda
Vim	Vimarśinī
Vi	Vivaraṇa
Vṛ	Vṛtti
Y	Yāmala

Sections of Agamic Texts:

cp	caryāpāda
kp	kriyāpāda
vp	vidyāpāda
yp	yogapāda

Sections of Ayurvedic Texts:

CiSthā	Cikitsā Sthāna
ISthā	Indriya Sthāna
KaSthā	Kalpa Sthāna
NiSthā	Nidāna Sthāna
ŚaSthā	Śārīra Sthāna
SiSthā	Siddhi Sthāna
SūSthā	Sūtra Sthāna
ViSthā	Vimāna Sthāna

Major Texts

AbhidhKo	Abhidharma Kośa
AbhidhSamu	Abhidharma Samuccaya
AbhŚāk	Abhijñānaśākuntala
Abhil	Abhilaṣītārtha-Cintāmaṇi (also Mānasollāsa of Someśvara)
AbhiBhā	Abhinava Bhārati
AbhDar	Abhinaya Darpaṇa
Abhis	Abhisamayālaṅkāra
AbhNāṭ	Abhiṣeka Nāṭaka
AdhSū	Adhyayana-Sūtra
AghŚP	Aghoraśivācārya Paddhati
AgPur	Agni Purāṇa
AhSam	Ahirbudhnya Saṃhitā
AitĀr	Aitareya Āraṇyaka
AitBr	Aitareya Brāhmaṇa
AitUp	Aitareya Upaniṣad
AjKo	Ajaya Kośa
AjitĀ	Ajitāgama
ĀLP	Ālāpa Paddhati
AmKo	Amara Kośa
Amṛto	Amṛtodaya (Gokulanātha)

ABBREVIATIONS

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AneSaṅg	Anekārtha Saṅgraha
AṅgNik	Aṅguttara Nikāya
AnnaUp	Annapūrṇopaniṣad
AparPr	Aparājitā Pṛcchā
ĀpDhSū	Āpastamba Dharma-Sūtra
ĀpGrhSū	Āpastamba Gṛhya-Sūtra
ĀpŚrSū	Āpastamba Śrauta-Sūtra
ĀpŚulSū	Āpastamba Śulba-Sūtra
ArthŚ	Artha-Śāstra
ArthViSū	Arthaviniścaya-Sūtra
ArtaViSūNib	Arthaviniścayasūtranibandhana (Vīryaśrīdatta)
Ārya	Āryabhaṭṭya
ĀryaMS	Āryamañjuśrīnāmasaṅgīti (with Amṛtakaṇikānāma... comm.)
ĀśCū	Āścaryacūḍāmaṇi (Śaktibhadra)
AṣṭH	Aṣṭāṅga-Hṛdaya (Vāgbhaṭa-I)
AṣṭSaṅg	Aṣṭāṅga-Saṅgraha (Vāgbhaṭa-II)
AṣṭPrPār	Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñā Pāramitā
ĀśvaGrhSū	Āśvalāyana Gṛhya-Sūtra
ĀśvaŚrSū	Āśvalāyana Śrauta-Sūtra
AV	Atharvaveda (Śaunaka)
AV(P)	Atharvaveda (Paippalāda)
AVPari	Atharvaveda Parīṣiṣṭa
AtSam	Atri Saṃhitā
Aṭṭh	Aṭṭhasālinī (on Dhammasaṅgaṇi)
Aucitya	Aucityavicāracalā (Kṣemendra)
Avim	Avimāraka
BālCa	Bālacarita
BDhSū	Baudhāyana Dharma-Sūtra
BGrhSū	Baudhāyana Gṛhya-Sūtra
BŚrSū	Baudhāyana Śrauta-Sūtra
BŚulSū	Baudhāyana Śulba-Sūtra
BhG	Bhagavad-Gītā
BhGŚBh	Bhagavad-Gītā Śāṅkara Bhāṣya
BhāgPur	Bhāgavata Purāṇa
BhSi	Bhaktirasāmṛtasindhu (Rūpa Gosvāmin)
BhRas	Bhaktirasāyana (Madhusūdana Sarasvatī)
BhārGrhSū	Bhāradvāja Gṛhya-Sūtra
BhārŚrSū	Bhāradvāja Śrauta-Sūtra
BhaBh	Bharata Bhāṣya (Nānyadeva)
BhāCam	Bhārata Campū
BhāPari	Bhāṣāpariccheda
BhPrak	Bhāva Prakāśana (Śāradātanaya)

Bhr̥Sam	Bhr̥gu Saṃhitā
BhuPr	Bhuvana Pradīpa
BoCar	Bodhicaryāvatāra
BoBhū	Bodhisattvabhūmi
BraPur	Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa
BrPur	Brahma Purāṇa
BrSū	Brahma-Sūtra
BrSūŚBh	Brahma-Sūtra Śaṅkara Bhāṣya
Br̥Up	Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad
Br̥D	Bṛhaddeśī (Mataṅga)
Br̥Dev	Bṛhaddevatā (Śaunaka)
Br̥Jā	Bṛhat Jātaka
Br̥Sam	Bṛhat Saṃhitā (Varāhamihira)
BudCa	Buddhacarita
CāVyā	Cāndra Vyākaraṇa
CarSam	Caraka Saṃhitā
Cāru	Cārudatta
ChāgUp	Chāgaleya Upaniṣad
ChaSū	Chandaḥ-Sūtra
ChUp	Chāndogya Upaniṣad
Chan	Chandomañjarī
CiL	Citra-Lakṣaṇa
Cit	Citsukhī
DakMūSt	Dakṣiṇāmūrtistotra
DBhūSū	Daśabhūmika-Sūtra
DUVṛ	Daśapādī Uṇādi Vṛtti
DaRū	Daśarūpaka
Datti	Dattilam (Dattila)
DBhāgPur	Devī Bhāgavata Purāṇa
DPur	Devī Purāṇa
DhPad	Dhammapada
DhSaṅ	Dhammasaṅgaṇi
Dhav	Dhavalā (comm. on ṢaṭĀ) (Vīrasenācārya)
Dhū	Dhūrtaviṭasaṃvāda
DhvĀl	Dhvanyāloka
DhvĀlLoc	Dhvanyāloka-Locana (Abhinavagupta)
DighNik	Dīgha Nikāya
DīĀ	Dīptāgama
Divyāv	Divyāvadāna
DSaṅ	Dravyasaṅgraha (Nemicandra)
DSaṅVṛ	Dravyasaṅgraha Vṛtti (Brahma Deva)
DuSapta	Durgā Saptaśatī

ABBREVIATIONS

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Dūta	Dūtaghaṭotkaca
EpInd	Epigraphica Indica
GāSa	Gāhā Sattasai (Gāthā Saptaśatī)
Gaṇar	Gaṇaratnamahodadhi
GanT	Gandharva Tantra
GarbhUp	Garbhopaniṣad
GarPur	Garuḍa Purāṇa
GauDhSū	Gautama Dharma-Sūtra
GGrhSū	Gobhila Gṛhya-Sūtra
GomJiv	Gommaṭasāra Jivakāṇḍa (Nemicandra)
GoBr	Gopatha Brāhmaṇa
GuhyaT	Guhyasamāja Tantra (with Guhyasamāja-Pradīpa ... comm.)
HaiKo	Haima Kośa
HBVil	Haribhaktivilāsa
HarPur	Harivaṃśa Purāṇa
HaCa	Harṣacarita
HyPrad	Haṭhayoga Pradīpikā
HayaPāñc	Hayaśīrṣa Pāñcarātra
HT	Hevajra Tantra
Hit	Hitopadeśa
ĪśGP	Īśānaśivagurudeva Paddhati
ĪśUp	Īśa Upaniṣad
ĪPraKā	Īśvara Pratyabhijñā-Kārikā (Utpaladeva)
ĪPraVim	Īśvara Pratyabhijñā Vimarśinī (Abhinavagupta)
ĪPraVivVim	Īśvara Pratyabhijñā Vivṛti Vimarśinī
ĪśSam	Īśvara Saṃhitā
JaimUpBr	Jaiminiya Upaniṣad Brāhmaṇa
Jā	Jātaka
Jāmā	Jātakamālā
JāUp	Jāvālopaniṣad
JaySam	Jayākhya Saṃhitā
JinSam	Jina Saṃhitā
JivPradṬi	Jivatattvapradīpikā Ṭikā (on GomJiv)
Jñān	Jñānārṇava (Śubhacandra)
Kād	Kādambarī
KāCaT	Kālacakra Tantra
KāPur	Kālikā Purāṇa
KāmKVil	Kāma-Kalā-Vilāsa
KāmSū	Kāma-Sūtra
KāmĀ	Kāmikāgama
KāVṛ	Kāśikā Vṛtti
KāśSam	Kāśyapa Saṃhitā

KāśŚi	Kāśyapa Śilpa
KāVyā	Kātantra Vyākaraṇa
KāṭhSam	Kāṭhaka Saṃhitā
KaṭhUp	Kaṭha Upaniṣad
KātBhāSū	Kātyāyana Bhāṣika-Sūtra
KātŚrSū	Kātyāyana Śrauta-Sūtra
KātŚrSūBh	Kātyāyana Śrauta-Sūtra Bhāṣya (Karka Bhāṣya)
KātSulSū	Kātyāyana Śulba-Sūtra
KauśSū	Kauśika-Sūtra
KauṣUp	Kauṣītaki Upaniṣad
Kāvyād	Kāvyādarśa
Kāvyāl	Kāvyālaṅkāra (Bhāmaha)
KāvyālSū	Kāvyālaṅkāra-Sūtra (Vāmana)
KāMīm	Kāvya-Mīmāṃsā
KāPrak	Kāvya Prakāśa
KeUp	Kena Upaniṣad
KhGrhSū	Khādīra Grhya-Sūtra
KhudNik	Khuddaka Nikāya
Kir	Kirātārjunīyam
Kod	Kodaṇḍamaṇḍana
KulT	Kulārṇava Tantra
Kum	Kumārasambhava
KūrPur	Kūrma Purāṇa
Kuva	Kuvalayānanda
LYVās	Laghu Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha (Abhinanda)
LT	Lakṣmī Tantra
Lalitā	Lalitā-Sahasranāma (with Bhāṣya)
LVi	Lalitavistara
LaSū	Laṅkāvatāra-Sūtra
Lilā	Līlāvati (Bhāskarācārya)
MāDhā	Mādhavīyā Dhātuvṛtti
MVy	Madhyamavyāyoga
MāKā	Mādhyamika-Kārikā
MBh	Mahābhārata
Mahābh	Mahābhāṣya
MNUp	Mahānārāyaṇa Upaniṣad
MNPrak	Mahānaya Prakāśa
MNT	Mahānirvāṇa Tantra
MPur	Mahā Purāṇa
MaMa	Mahārtha Mañjarī
MSSaṅg	Mahāsubhāṣita Saṅgraha (Ed. L. Sternbach)
MVas	Mahāvastu

ABBREVIATIONS

xxiii

MaCa	Mahāvīracarita
Mahāv	Mahāvyutpatti
MSūAl	Mahāyāna Sūtrālaṅkāra
MaViṃ	Mahāyānaviṃśaka
MahāUp	Mahopaniṣad
MaitSam	Maitrāyaṇī Saṃhitā
MaitUp	Maitrāyaṇī Upaniṣad
MajNik	Majjhima Nikāya
MālMā	Mālatīmādhava
Māla	Mālavikāgnimitra
MVT	Mālinīvijayottara Tantra
MāMey	Mānameyodaya
MāSā	Mānasāra
MānŚrSū	Mānava Śrauta-Sūtra
MānŚulSū	Mānava Śulba-Sūtra
MāṇḍKā	Māṇḍūkya-Kārikā
MāṇḍUp	Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad
MMK	Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa
Manu	Manu Smṛti
MarSam	Marīci Saṃhitā (Vaikhānasa Āgama)
MārKpur	Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa
MPĀ	Mataṅgapārameśvara Āgama
MatPur	Matsya Purāṇa
Mayam	Mayamata
MedKo	Medinī Kośa
Megh	Meghadūta
MilPañ	Milinda Pañha
MīmNyPrak	Mīmāṃsānyāya Prakāśa (Āpodeva)
MīmSū	Mīmāṃsā-Sūtra (with Śābara Bhāṣya)
MKā	Mokṣa-Kārikā
Mṛcch	Mṛcchakaṭika
MṛgĀ	Mṛgendra Āgama
Mudrā	Mudrārākṣasa
MuktUp	Muktikopaniṣad
Mūl	Mūlācāra (Ācārya Vaṭṭakera)
MūMāKā	Mūla Mādhyamaka-Kārikā
MuṇḍUp	Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad
NādaKā	Nāda-Kārikā (Bhaṭṭa Rāmakaṇṭha)
Nāgā	Nāgānanda
NaiCa	Naiṣadhiyacarita
Nāsā	Nāṇasāra (Jñānasāra) (Padmasingh Munirāja)
NārBhSū	Nārada Bhakti-Sūtra

NārSam	Nārada Saṃhitā
NārŚik	Nāradiya Śikṣā
NārŚil	Nārada Śilpa-Śāstra
NN	Nartana Nirṇaya
NLRKo	Nāṭakalakṣaṇaratna Kośa (Sāgaranandin)
NŚ	Nāṭya-Śāstra
Nay	Nayacakra (Mailladhavala)
NT	Netra Tantra
Nigh	Nighaṇṭu
Nir	Nirukta (Yāska)
NīŚat	Nītiśataka
NiṢo	Nityaṣoḍaśikārṇava
NiSā	Niyamasāra (Kundakundācārya)
NiṢo	Nityaṣoḍaśikārṇava
NrKo	Nṛttaratna Kośa
NṛtRat	Nṛttaratnāvalī (Jayasenāpati)
NyDīp	Nyāyadīpikā (Dharma Bhūṣaṇa)
Nyā	Nyāyamañjarī
NySū	Nyāya-Sūtra
NySūBh	Nyāya-Sūtra Bhāṣya
Pādtāḍ	Pādatāḍitaka
PPrā	Padma Prābhṛtaka
PPur	Padma Purāṇa
PSam	Padma Saṃhitā (Pāñcarātra School)
Pañcad	Pañcadaśī
Pañ(P)	Pañcādhyāyī (Pūrvārdha) (Rājamalla)
Pañ(U)	Pañcādhyāyī (Uttarārdha) (Rājamalla)
Pañca	Pañcarātra
PkāSā	Pañcāstikāya Sāra (Kundakundācārya)
Pañc	Pañcatantra
Pā	Pāṇini Aṣṭādhyāyī
PāDhā	Pāṇinīya Dhātupāṭha
PāŚik	Pāṇinīya Śikṣā
PPraṬī	Parama Prakāśa Ṭīkā
ParSā	Paramārthasāra
PPra	Paramātmā Prakāśa (Yogīndu Deva)
ParSam	Parameśvara Saṃhitā
PāSū	Pārānanda-Sūtra
PārāŚik	Pārāśara Śikṣā
PārGrhSū	Pāraskara Gr̥hya-Sūtra
PTri	Parātrīśikā (Tantra)
Paribh	Paribhāṣenduśekhara

ABBREVIATIONS

xxv

PāsuSū	Pāśupata-Sūtra
PauṣSam	Pauṣkara Saṃhitā
PSā	Pavayaṇasāra (Pravacanasāra) (Kundakundācārya)
PiṅUp	Piṅgalopaniṣad
PraCan	Prabodhacandrodaya
PraPañ	Prakaraṇapañcikā
PramMīm	Pramāṇamīmāṃsā (Hemacandrācārya)
PraRat	Prameya Ratnāvalī (Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa)
PSāT	Prapañcasāra Tantra
PP	Prasannapadā
PrSam	Praśna Saṃhitā
PraUp	Praśna Upaniṣad
PrR	Prasthāna-Ratnākara
PraYau	Pratijñā Yaugandharāyaṇa
PraNāṭ	Pratimā Nāṭaka
PrH	Pratyabhijñā-Hṛdaya
PravBh	Pravacana Bhāṣya (on SāmSū) (Vijñānabhikṣu)
Pri	Priyadarśikā
Pug	Puggalapaññatti
Rāga	Rāgavibodha (Somanātha)
Ragh	Raghuvamśa
RājTar	Rājatarāṅgiṇī
RāVā	Rājavārtika (Bhaṭṭa Akalaṅkadeva)
Rām	Rāmāyaṇa
RāmCam	Rāmāyaṇa Campū
RasGa	Rasagaṅgādhara (Jagannātha)
RP	Ratna Parīkṣā (Īśvara Dikṣit)
RaPa	Ratnatraya-Parīkṣā
Rat	Ratnāvalī
RauĀ	Raurava Āgama
Rāya	Rāyapasenīyam
RV	Ṛgveda
RVPrāt	Ṛgveda Prātiśākhya
RSar	Ṛk Sarvānukramaṇī
Rtu	Ṛtusamhāra
Rūp	Rūpamaṇḍana (Maṇḍana)
SaddhPuSū	Saddharma Puṇḍarīka-Sūtra
ṢaḍBr	Ṣaḍviṃśa Brāhmaṇa
SāDar	Sāhitya-Darpaṇa
ŚĀPM	Śaivāgama Paribhāṣāmañjarī
ŚPar	Śaiva Paribhāṣā
Sakalā	Sakalādhikāra (Agastya)

SamāRāj	Samādhirāja
SamSūt	Samarāṅgaṇa-Sūtradhāra (Bhoja)
SV	Sāmaveda
SViBr	Sāmavidhāna Brāhmaṇa
ŚāmPañcā	Śāmba Pañcāśikā
SāmKā	Sāṃkhya-Kārikā
SāmSū	Sāṃkhya-Sūtra
SamNik	Samyutta Nikāya
SDām	Saṅgīta-Dāmodara
SDar	Saṅgīta-Darpaṇa
SMak	Saṅgīta-Makaranda
SRāj	Saṅgītarāja
SR	Saṅgīta-Ratnākara (Śārṅgadeva)
SaṅkSūr	Saṅkalpasūryodaya (Veṅkaṭanātha)
ŚāṅkhĀr	Śāṅkhāyana Āraṇyaka
ŚāṅkhBr	Śāṅkhāyana Brāhmaṇa
ŚāṅkhŚrSū	Śāṅkhāyana Śrauta-Sūtra
ŚāTil	Śāradā-Tilaka
Sark	Sarasvatīkaṇṭhābharaṇa (Alaṅkāra-Śāstra)
SākāT	Sārdhatriśatikālottara Tantra
SarDSaṅg	Sarvadarśana-Saṅgraha
SaSi	Sarvārthasiddhi (Ācārya Pūjyapāda Devanandī)
ŚBr	Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa
ṢaṭĀ	Ṣaṭkhaṇḍāgama (Puṣpadanta & Bhūtabali)
ṢaṭSan	Ṣaṭsandarbha (Śivagosvāmin)
SātSam	Sātvata Samhitā
Saun	Saundarananda
SLah	Saundaryalaharī
SeṬi	Sekoddeśaṭikā
SiKau	Siddhānta Kaumudī
SiddhSaṅg	Siddhāntaleśa-Saṅgraha
SiddhŚir	Siddhānta-Śiromaṇi
ŚikSamu	Śikṣāsamuccaya
ŚiL	Śilpalakṣaṇa
ŚiPrak	Śilpa Prakāśa (Rāmacandra Kaulācāra)
ŚiRaKo	Śilparatnakośa (Sthāpaka Niraṅjana Mahāpātra)
Śiśu	Śiśupālavadha
ŚDṛ	Śiva Dṛṣṭi
ŚMSt	Śivamahimnastotra
ŚPur	Śiva Purāṇa
ŚSam	Śiva Samhitā
ŚSto	Śiva Stotrāvalī

ABBREVIATIONS

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ŚSū	Śiva-Sūtra
ŚSūVā	Śiva-Sūtra Vārttika (Varadācārya)
ŚSūVim	Śiva-Sūtra Vimarśinī (Kṣemarāja)
SkaPur	Skanda Purāṇa
ŚIVā	Ślokavārttika
SP	Somaśambhu Paddhati
SpKā	Spanda-Kārikā
SpNir	Spanda Nirṇaya
ŚrīBh	Śrī Bhāṣya (on Brahma-Sūtra)
ŚrīkBh	Śrīkaṇṭha Bhāṣya (on Brahma-Sūtra)
ŚTaCi	Śrītattvacintāmaṇi
ŚrPrak	Śṛṅgāra Prakāśa
ŚNSā	Śukranītisāra
SupĀ	Suprabheda Āgama
SūrSiddh	Sūrya-Siddhānta
SuSam	Suśruta Saṃhitā
SutNip	Sutta Nipāta
SvT	Svacchanda Tantra
Svap	Svapnavāśavadatta
ŚvUp	Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad
Syād	Syādvādamāñjarī
TĀr	Taittirīya Āraṇyaka
TBr	Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa
TSam	Taittirīya Saṃhitā
TUp	Taittirīya Upaniṣad
TāṇḍMBr	Tāṇḍya Mahābrāhmaṇa
TĀl	Tantrāloka (Abhinavagupta)
TSamu	Tantrasamuccaya
TSā	Tantrasāra (Abhinavagupta)
TaBhā	Tarka Bhāṣā
TarkSaṅg	Tarka-Saṅgraha
TaKau	Tattva Kaumudī
TaPrak	Tattva Prakāśa
TaSū	Tattvārthādhigama-Sūtra (Tattvārtha-Sūtra)
TaSā	Tattvārthasāra (Aṃṛtacandra)
TaVā	Tattvārtha Vārttika
TasaSū	Tattvasamāsa-Sūtra
TaSaṅg	Tattva-Saṅgraha
TaVai	Tattva Vaiśārādī
TiPa	Tiloya Paṇṇattī (Vṛṣabhācārya)
Trik	Trikāṇḍaśeṣa
UbhSā	Ubhayābhisārikā

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KALĀTATTVAKOŚA

UjNīl	Ujjvalanīlamanī
UṇSū	Uṇādi-Sūtra
Urbh	Urubhaṅga
USū	Uttarādhyaṇa-Sūtra
UttCa	Uttararāmacarita
VaiKo	Vaijayantī Kośa
VaiĀ	Vaikhānasa Āgama
VaiGrhSū	Vaikhānasa Gr̥hya-Sūtra
VaiŚat	Vairāgyaśataka
VaiśSū	Vaiśeṣika-Sūtra
VaiśSūBh	Vaiśeṣika-Sūtra Bhāṣya
VaitSū	Vaitāna-Sūtra
VaJī	Vakroktijīvita
Vāk	Vākyapadīya
VāPur	Vāmana Purāṇa
VŚrSū	Vārāha Śrauta-Sūtra
VŚ	Vāstu-Śāstra (Viśvakarman)
VSUp	Vāstusūtra Upaniṣad
VVid	Vāstuvīdyā (Viśvakarman)
Vasu	Vasudevahiṇḍī
VPur	Vāyu Purāṇa
VedPar	Vedānta-Paribhāṣā
VedSā	Vedānta-Sāra
Veṇī	Veṇī Saṃhāra
Vibh	Vibhaṅga Pāli
ViBhai	Vijñāna Bhairava
Vik	Vikramorvaśīya
VinPiṭ	Vinaya Piṭaka
VirPañcā	Virūpākṣa Pañcāśikā
VDhPur	Viṣṇudharmottara Purāṇa
ViPur	Viṣṇu Purāṇa
ViSahasrBh	Viṣṇu-Sahasranāma Bhāṣya
ViSm	Viṣṇu Smṛti
ViMag	Visuddhimagga
ViśKo	Viśva Kośa
ViKo	Viśvaparakāśa Kośa
VivR	Vivādaratnākara
ViPSaṅg	Vivaraṇaprameya Saṅgraha
Vicū	Vivekacūḍāmaṇi
VyVive	Vyaktiviveka (Mahimabhaṭṭa)
YājŚik	Yājñavalkya Śikṣā
YājSm	Yājñavalkya Smṛti

ABBREVIATIONS

xxix

YV	Yajurveda (Vājasaneyi Saṃhitā)
YSū	Yoga-Sūtra
YSūBh	Yoga-Sūtra Bhāṣya (Vyāsa)
YWās	Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha
YYāj	Yogi Yājñavalkya
YoH	Yoginī-Hṛdaya
YuDīp	Yuktidīpikā (on Sāṃkhya-Kārikā)

1891	1891	1891
1892	1892	1892
1893	1893	1893
1894	1894	1894
1895	1895	1895
1896	1896	1896
1897	1897	1897
1898	1898	1898
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adhikaraṇa/ādhāra	upacāra/pūjā
adhikāra	upamā
adhibhūta-adhidaiva-adhyātma	ṛta-anṛta
(Vol. IV)	ojas
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svara

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haṁsa

hastā

hṛdaya

BRAHMAN

Overview

Brahman (n.), the absolute, cosmic, transcendent principle and immanent womb of everything, one of the most pervasive concepts of the Indian tradition, evades every clear definition, though the religious literature is full of attempts to describe the indescribable. As ultimate principle it is the One (*tad ekam*, RV X.129.2); its implied meanings are 'greatness (root *br̥h-*), sacredness, inner power, sacred Word (Veda) and wisdom', and it has been characterised as Being (*sat*), Consciousness (*cit*) and Bliss (*ānanda*). It is by nature permanent, stable, immortal, unchanging, inactive and yet contains all powers. It is the centre of everything and yet all-pervading.

Brahman is both being and non-being, fullness and void, it is the totality (*sarvam*) and yet it is not exhausted by any conception of it. But apart from being a metaphysical concept, *brahman* has also penetrated the different arts as the origin and goal of the aesthetic experience, as a symbol for centrality and vastness in space-conceptions, as the source of musical sound (*nādabrahman*).

Etymology

It is important to distinguish *bráhman* (accented on the first syllable), which is neuter and means Prayer, the sacred Word and the Absolute, from *brahmán* (accented on the second syllable), which is masculine and means the *brahman* priest and the creator god Brahmā (cf. Nigh II.7 and II.10).

The etymology of *brahman* (n.) has been the subject of a vast literature which cannot be discussed here. To mention only the most important theories regarding the linguistic derivation of this central term: L. Renou has tried to derive it from a root meaning 'to speak in riddles', *upa-ualh-* (*barh-/brah-*), because of the frequent association of *brahman*, in the Veda with riddles, enigma, and verbal contest (*brahmodya*). P. Thieme has assumed a basic meaning of 'formulation (of truth), form', trying to relate it to Greek *morphē* (form) (accepted by M. Mayrhofer). Apart from linguistic difficulties, such a basic meaning contradicts the idea of formlessness associated with *brahman* since the Upaniṣads. The most probable etymology, which is the one accepted by Indian exegetes and defended by J. Gonda and other western scholars, derives it from the root *br̥h-*, 'to grow, to become strong or great, to increase,' or, as Gonda says, 'to be perfect,' with suffix *-man* (cf. C. Wennerberg), related to *br̥hant*, 'great'. The basic meaning would

then be 'greatness, power, making grow'. This derivation also accounts for the frequent association of *brahman* with Brhaspati or *brahmaṇaspati* in the Veda.

Whatever may be the root and the Indo-European origin of the word, from its multiple usage in the Veda it is clear that *brāhman* belongs to the sphere of the sacred Word ($\rightarrow vāc$), of sacrifice ($\rightarrow yajña$), of the inspired hymn as well as other aspects of sacred language (*mantra*, *veda*, *ākhyāna*, cf. M.A. Mehendale; *brahmodya*, cf. L. Renou). Earlier western scholars translated it as 'magic' or 'magic power' (*Zauber* etc.), based on an outdated view of history of religions judging the phenomena from outside. Though we cannot accept the pejorative connotations of 'magic', its implications can be accepted as meaning 'a word or an action charged with a mysterious inner power'. Compare Geldner's explanation of *brahman*: "It means the inner strengthening and ecstatic mood obtained by means of Soma... the mysterious power inspiring the poet and making him a seer (cf. Nir II.11) which he transfers onto the gods... and generally everything that exercises a winning and enchanting, a 'magical' effect on the higher powers, especially the magic word" (Glossary to his RV translation s.v. *brahman*, tr. from German).

The different shades of meaning will become clear in the textual references. Gonda speaks of "the impossibility of 'reconstructing' a process of semantical development" (1950, p. 39). The problem is that of bridging the gap between the meaning of 'sacred formula' and the all-pervading absolute Reality (which Heesterman attempts, s.v. *brahman*, pp. 295f.).

Let us consider some traditional etymological explanations by way of example. The *Atharvaśira Upaniṣad* asks:

अथ कस्मादुच्यते परं ब्रह्म यस्मात्परमपरं परायणं च बृहद्ब्रह्म बृंहयति, तस्मादुच्यते परं ब्रह्म ।

Atharvaśira Up 4

Why is it called Supreme *Brahman*? because it is the highest of the highest, the supreme goal, the great which strengthens by great power, therefore it is called the Supreme *Brahman*.

The commentary to the *Viṣṇusahasranāma* attributed to Śaṅkara gives several explanations of *brahman*: *tapo vedāśca viprāśca jñānaṃ ca brahmasaṃjñitam*, "Brahman means penance, Vedas; brāhmaṇas well-versed in scripture and wisdom" (v. 84 no. 661), and: *bṛhatvād bṛhmaṇatvācca satyādilakṣaṇaṃ brahma*, "Brahman, reality – He is Brahman, characterized by be-ness, etc., as He is great and all-pervading" (v. 84 no. 664).

Layers of Meaning

It is practically impossible to treat *brahman* as a unitary concept, making abstraction from its semantical development. It is certain that the Vedic *brahman* is related to the creative process, unlike its Vedantic counterpart which is far removed from action (*niṣkriya*). Whatever may be the different shades of meaning in the Saṃhitās, *brahman* has a share in the creative and effective power of the Word (*vāc*), a fact that has contributed to its misleading translation as 'magic'. *Brahman* is a mystery, an enigma, a mysterious power which is effective and which bestows power on the sacred word and ritual. This dynamic power should not be forgotten when this concept is used in the arts, and it also survives in systems other than Vedānta, in theistic schools, but also in philosophy of language.

The other core-meaning which comes into prominence since the Brāhmaṇas, is developed in the Upaniṣads and philosophically reflected upon in Vedānta. Here the concept is gradually shedding its concrete associations, cosmic connections and identifications with various other realities, to become more and more an abstract, all-pervading, transcendent supreme Principle. Though the three characteristics of the Vedantic *brahman* are being, consciousness and bliss (*sat-cit-ānanda*), it is pure Being that dominates its understanding. The grammatical neutrality of *brahman* has also contributed to the fact that as such it has never been personified and has resisted the strong mythologizing and image-making tendency of ancient and medieval India. It has retained its impersonal or meta-personal nature and immanent fluidity, its only personification being the creator god Brahmā (m.) whose importance did not last long in the Indian religious history.

Of fundamental importance is the twofold nature of *brahman*: formed (*mūrta*) and formless (*amūrta*), or with sound (*śabda*) and soundless (*aśabda*), which the Upaniṣads have expressed and which continues to have its impact on the arts. This twofold reality also implies time (*kāla*) and timelessness (*akāla*), with attributes (*saguṇa*) or free from attributes (*nirguṇa*).

Depending on its various connections and identifications at the levels of ritual, cosmos, and consciousness, *brahman* is also identified with divisions into three (e.g. *triloka* or the three creative 'utterances' *bhūr, bhuvar, svar*), four (three states of consciousness with a fourth, transcendent state, *tuṛīya*), five (the 'five *brahmans*' being five *mantras*, cf. Śaivism). *Brahman* being identified or immanent in all these yet remains essentially transcending them.

These basic meanings are implied in compounds with *brahma*—where it can have the following implications: supreme, transcendent (e.g. *brahmaloka*, *brahmanirvāṇa*); centrality (e.g. *brahmasthāna*, *brahmabindu*, meaning not only a

static central place, but a dynamic, pervasive presence); divine splendour (e.g. *brahmavarcas*); cosmic pervasiveness (e.g. *brahmacakra*, *brahmāṇḍa*); innermost spiritual presence (e.g. *brahmapura*, *brahmarandhra*); saving or liberating goal (e.g. *brahmavidyā*, *brahmānanda*), and many more.

We may summarize some of the core-meanings of *brahman* in the words of Maryla Falk: "Thus *brahman* (*sat-satyam*) appears in the course of the cosmo-psychic drama in several aspects: (a) as transcendent universal Being, anterior to any concrete reality, (b) as the causal factor of differentiation, (c) as the innermost essence of the beings determining their individual existence, (d) as the dynamic essence of soteriological knowledge, reconducting the differentiation to the original unity, freeing the individual from the bonds of ignorance and becoming " (*Nāma-rūpa* and *Dharma-rūpa*, p.27).

As a concept for ultimate Reality, *brahman* is close to →*puruṣa* and →*ātman* with which it has been frequently identified.

Development of the Concept

In the *R̥gveda* *brāhman* occurs frequently in the sense of 'prayer, hymn', a prayer that is powerful and can achieve what it intends, in conjunction with the sacrifice:

एहि स्तोमौ अभि स्वराऽभि गृणीह्या रुव ।

ब्रह्म च नो वसो सचेन्द्र यज्ञं च वर्धय ॥

RV I.10.4

Come hither, answer thou the song in approval, cry loud.

Good Indra, make our prayer succeed, and prosper this our sacrifice.

(Tr. R.T.H. Griffith)

Here *brāhman* is associated with different aspects of song (*stoma*, *svara*). In this sense it is also used in the plural:

इन्द्रा याहि धियेषितो विप्रजूतः सुतावतः ।

उप ब्रह्माणि वाघतः ॥

RV I.3.5

Urged by the holy singer, sped by song, come Indra, to the prayers.

In our libations take delight. (Tr. R.T.H. Griffith)

This 'prayer' being a poetical composition is thus 'made' (frequent use of the root *kṛ-* in connection with *brāhman*, cf. RV I.63.9), or even fashioned, 'sculpted' (root *takṣ-*):

BRAHMAN

5

सनायते गोतम इन्द्र नव्यमतक्षद् ब्रह्म हरियोजनाय ।

सुनीथाय नः शवसान नोधाः प्रातर्मक्षू धियावसुर्जगम्यात् ॥

RV I.62.13

O mighty Indra, Gotama's son Nodhas has fashioned this new prayer to thee Eternal. Sure leader, yoker of Tawny Coursers.

May he, enriched with prayer, come soon and early.

(Tr. R.T.H. Griffith)

The association with verbs such as *kṛ-* and *takṣ-* has led to the earlier opinion that *brāhman* has to do with a magical act, but this interpretation is not necessary. J. Gonda interprets this usage rather in the sense of “‘to generate, to activate’ the particular power which goes by the name of b. and which, in the form of, or concentrated in sacral words or rites, is held to strengthen the gods” (Gonda, 1950, p. 41; cf. RV VII.103.8). The occurrence of *dhī* in the context of *brāhman* is also noteworthy, because it is related to the poetic and spiritual inspiration which expresses itself in song or hymn (cf. RV VIII.35.16–18, also the *gāyatrī mantra*, RV III.62.10, etc.). *Brāhman* is also a power which strengthens the gods (cf. RV II.17.3, III.12.14, etc.), protects the people (cf. RV I.152.7, III.53.12), dispels darkness (cf. RV V.40.6) and bestows riches and offspring (cf. RV VIII.6.9; IX.86.41, etc.).

The possessor of *brāhman* is the *brahmán* priest, and the priest *par excellence*, the ‘Lord of Brahman’: *brahmaṇaspati* or *bṛhaspati* (cf. TSam II.2.9.1), who is also identified with Agni (being the divine priest of the sacrifice, cf. RV II.1.3). Agni is also called “the first-born of *brāhman*” (*prathamajā brāhmaṇah*, RV III.29.15), an expression which is parallel to the frequent *prathamajā ṛtasya*, “first-born of sacred order” (cf. RV I.164.37), so that “we would have in *brāhman* a power which could be the ‘realization’ or ‘revelation’ of *ṛta* (the cosmic-ritual Order)” (L. Renou, p. 85). The *brāhman* priest as surveyor of the sacrifice is the one who keeps silence (*tūṣṇīm*), because he controls the sacred action by his concentration. He is more associated with *manas* than with *vāc* (cf. ChUp IV.16.2, BrUp III.1.6), and when he speaks, his words are charged with silence (cf. L. Renou). This has to do with the insight expressed in the **Taittirīya Saṃhitā**:

अथ ब्रह्म वदन्ति परिमिता वा ऋचः परिमितानि सामानि परिमितानि यजूंष्यथैतस्यैवान्तो नास्ति यद्ब्रह्म ।

TSam VII.3.1.4

The ṛk verses are limited, the melodies are limited, the sacrificial formulas are limited but *brāhman* is that which is unlimited.

(Tr. J. Gonda)

This shows that *brahman*, in spite of its close relationship with the sacred word,

cannot be reduced to the level of speech (KeUp I.5), the word being only its expression, its symbol so to say. In the words of J. Gonda: "But it is also obvious that its meanings or shades of meanings represent only facets or manifestations of an idea which is more general than 'sacred word, hymn; rite, ritual potency, etc.' which is even more comprehensive than these objects added together, and that these objects are designated by the same name, because they all participate in or partake of that important and central concept" (Gonda, *op. cit.*, p. 14).

Brāhman is finally the essence of the cosmic-ritual riddles and dialogues called *brahmodya*, hence its meaning as 'mystery, enigma'. These *brahmodyas* took place at important moments of the Vedic ritual, and were later transformed into the dialogues of the Upaniṣads. To the questions about the "furthest limit of the earth, the navel of the world, the seed of the horse, the highest heaven of speech" (RV I.164.34) the reply is:

इयं वेदिः परो अन्तः पृथिव्या अयं यज्ञो भुवनस्य नाभिः ।
 अयं सोमो वृष्णो अश्वस्य रेतो ब्रह्मायं वाचः परमं व्योम ॥
 RV I.164.35

The altar is the furthest limit of earth;
 this sacrifice of ours is the world's center;
 the Soma is the Stallion's Prolific seed;
 our prayer is the highest heaven where abides the Word.
 (Tr. R. Panikkar)

Most Vedic scholars (e.g. Geldner, Griffith) take *brahmán* here to be the priest, but in any case the relationship of the power of the word or its human representative with the highest firmament is significant. It comes in the context of the cosmic-ritual correspondences: "The point of the riddle contest is to show that one has 'seen' or understood the hidden 'connection' by responding with a similar ... riddle. The one who holds out longest ... is the winner, the true *brahman*, holder of the hidden connection ... In the last resort, then, man as a contestant must place himself in the open gap of the unresolved cosmic riddle and vindicate himself as the live 'connection' that holds together the cosmos" (J. Heesterman, *art. cit.*, p. 295). In one of these *brahmodyas* of the *Vājasaneyi Samhitā* the first of the questions revolves around the sun: "Who is it that moves solitary?" (*kaṣṣvid ekākī carati*, YV XXIII.45) and the reply is: *sūrya*. The question is again put: "which is that light equal to the sun?" (*kiṃ svit sūryasamaṃ jyotiḥ*, YV XXIII.47), the answer being: "*Brāhman* is the light equal to the sun" (*brahma sūryasamaṃ jyotiḥ*, YV XXIII.48). This correspondence between *brāhman* and the sun and, generally, between a spiritual or ritual and a cosmic reality, is a forerunner of the Upanisadic equations.

It is the *Atharvaveda* which has given prominence to the 'mysterious' nature

of *brāhman*. A solar symbolism seems equally to be implied in the hymn which bears the title *brahmavidyā* and has been revealed to Vena, a seer who is closely associated with the mystery of *brāhman*.

ब्रह्म जज्ञानं प्रथमं पुरस्ताद्वि सीमतः सुरुचो वेन आवः ।
स बुध्न्या उपमा अस्य विष्ठाः सतश्च योनिमसतश्च वि वः ॥

AV IV.1.1 (cf. V.6.1)

That Sacred Word which was first born in the East
the Seer has revealed from the shining horizon,
He disclosed its varied aspects, high and low,
the womb of both the Existent and the Nonexistent. (Tr. R. Panikkar)

The designation of *brāhman* as *yonī*, the womb of all existence, is even later reflected in Vedānta. In this mystical hymn the aspects of *brāhman* as origin and originated, its cosmic birth and its manifestation as sacred Word are all present:

प्र यो जज्ञे विद्वानस्य बन्धुर्विश्वा देवानां जनिमा विवक्ति ।
ब्रह्म ब्रह्मण उज्जभार मध्यात्रीचैरुच्चैः स्वधा अभि प्र तस्थौ ॥

AV IV.1.3

The wise who knows from birth this world's hidden thread
discerns the coming to birth of all the Gods.
From the bosom of the Sacred Word he brought forth the Word.
On high, below, he abides in his own laws. (Tr. R. Panikkar)

Brāhman is itself the connection (*bandhu*, cf. AV II.1.3), and it is also a cosmogonic power:

ब्रह्मणा भूमिर्विहिता ब्रह्म द्यौरुत्तरा हिता ।
ब्रह्मेदमूर्ध्वं तिर्यक्चान्तरिक्षं व्यचो हितम् ॥

AV X.2.25

By Brahma was this earth disposed: Brahma is sky arranged above.
Brahma is this expanse of air lifted on high and stretched across.
(Tr. R.T.H. Griffith)

Being a cosmogonic power, it is on *brāhman* that a house has to be founded in order to be stable; though it has also the meaning of the sacred word or prayer:

ब्रह्मणा शालां निमितां कविभिर्निमितां मिताम् ।

AV IX.3.19ab

This house was founded by *brāhman*, built and created by the wise.

Brahman is the innermost power, both in the cosmos (cf. AV XII.1.29 where it makes the earth strong, *kṣamāṃ bhūmiṃ brahmaṇā vāyrdhānām*), and in man (cf. AV XI.5.22, the *brahmacārin*). Not only the priest carries that innermost power, but the *kavi*, the inspired poet, and the *brahmacārin*, the one who 'practices' and who is also an 'incarnation' of *brahman*, and ultimately everyone 'who knows'. This idea leads to the Upanisadic dictum that "he who knows *brahman* becomes *brāhman*" (cf. KauṣUp I.4). In the hymn to the cosmic Support, *skambha*, all the supreme principles are assembled:

ये पुरुषे ब्रह्म विदुस्ते विदुः परमेष्ठिनम् ।
 यो वेद परमेष्ठिनं यश्च वेद प्रजापतिम् ।
 ज्येष्ठं ये ब्राह्मणं विदुस्ते स्कम्भमनुसंविदुः ॥

AV X.7.17

They who in *puruṣa* understand *Brahman* know Him who is Supreme.
 He who knows Him who is Supreme, and he who knows the Lord of
 Life,

These know the loftiest Power Divine, and thence know *Skambha*
 thoroughly. (Tr. R.T.H. Griffith)

Skambha, the centre of the universe, is itself a symbol of *brāhman*.

The *Brāhmaṇas* frequently equate *brahman* with the sacrifice (cf. ŚBr III.1.4.15, V.3.2.4, etc.), but also with cosmic order (*ṛta*, ŚBr IV.1.4.10), with *Agni* (cf. ŚBr I.3.3.19, etc.), with *vāc* and with truth (ŚBr II.1.4.10). As a cosmogonic principle it is self-existent (*svayambhū*, cf. ŚBr X.6.5.9, XIII.7.1.1) and creates through *tapas* and self-sacrifice:

ब्रह्म वै स्वयंभु तपोऽतप्यत । ... तत् सर्वेषु भूतेष्वात्मानं हुत्वा, भूतानि चात्मनि, सर्वेषां
 भूतानां श्रेष्ठ्यं, स्वाराज्यम्, आधिपत्यं पर्यैत् ।

ŚBr XIII.7.1.1

Brahman svayambhu (the self-existent, neuter) was performing
 austerities ... And accordingly, by offering up his own self in the
 creatures, and the creatures in his own self, he compassed the
 supremacy, the sovereignty, and the lordship over all creatures.

(Tr. J. Eggeling)

We find here the cosmogonic correspondence to the equation *ātman-brahman*, later expressed in static terms. An account of cosmogony reveals both, the ascent and descent of *brahman*:

ब्रह्म वा इदमग्र आसीत् । तद्देवानसृजत । तद्देवात्सृष्ट्वैषु लोकेषु व्यारोहयत् । ... अथ ब्रह्मैव
 परार्द्धमगच्छत् । तत्परार्द्धं गत्वैक्षत । कथं न्विमान् लोकान् प्रत्यवेयामिति । तत् द्वाभ्यामेव

प्रत्यवैद्रूपेण चैव नाम्ना च । ...

ŚBr XI.2.3.1, 3

Verily, in the beginning this (universe) was the *Brahman* (n.). It created the gods, and having created the gods, it made them ascend these worlds ... Then the *Brahman* itself went up to the sphere beyond. Having gone up to the sphere beyond, it considered, 'How can I descend again into these worlds? It then descended again by means of these two – Form and Name. (Tr. J. Eggeling)

It not only created the gods, but made them immortal:

मर्त्या ह वा अग्रे देवा आसुः । स यदैव ते ब्रह्मणाऽऽपुः । अथामृता आसुः ।

ŚBr XI.2.3.6

In the beginning, indeed, the gods were mortal, and only when they had become possessed of the *Brahman* they were immortal.
(Tr. J. Eggeling)

Without pretending to outline a complete semantic development, it is certain that all the above Vedic meanings culminate, are transformed and deepened in the Upaniṣads. The material on *brahman* in the Upaniṣads is so rich that we cannot possibly exhaust it in a short summary. The very purport of the Upaniṣads is *brahmavidyā*. Generally speaking, there are two ways of attaining or realizing *brahman*: by affirmation or by negation. The first follows a path of progressive identification, it is one of inclusiveness, where every reality is experienced as *brahman*. Among the ancient Upaniṣads it is the **Chāndogya** which represents this approach, as in the teaching of Sanatkumāra to Nārada (ChUp VII.1–26). Here the following realities are progressively identified with *brahman*: name (*nāman*), speech (*vāc*), mind (*manas*), conception (*saṃkalpa*), thought (*citta*), meditation (*dhyāna*), understanding (*viññāna*), strength (*bala*), food (*anna*), water (*ap*), fire (*tejas*), space (*ākāśa*), memory (*smara*), hope (*āśā*), life or breath (*prāṇa*), etc. until finally the fullness (*bhūman*) is discovered (23–24), which is identical with immortality. Each time it is said that: "He who reveres (meditates upon) speech (etc.) as *brahman* has unlimited freedom as far as speech (etc.) goes" (VII.2.2, etc.). Some of these identifications have been very common, but were equally questioned, e.g. the equation with food (*anna*, cf. TUp II.2) and with life-breath (*prāṇa*, cf. BṛUp V.12). Another ancient 'definition' of *brahman* in the **Chāndogya Upaniṣad** identifies it with *prāṇa* (life), with *ka* (joy) and with *kha* (void, space) (ChUp IV.10.4–5).

The negative approach questions every possible identification of *brahman* with any of our sensual, mental or intellectual perceptions. Only a question (*kena*, "by whom?" (KeUp I.1) and the negation of all objectified knowledge can reach

the reality of *brahman* (KeUp I.3).

यद्वाचाऽनभ्युदितं येन वागभ्युद्यते ।
तदेव ब्रह्म त्वं विद्धि नेदं यदिदमुपासते ॥

KeUp I.5

That which cannot be expressed by speech,
that by which speech is expressed –
that indeed know as *brahman*,
not what people worship as this (i.e. as an object).

The **Taittirīya Upaniṣad** also expresses the apophatic dimension of *brahman*, adding that its real nature is bliss:

यतो वाचो निवर्तन्ते अप्राप्य मनसा सह ।
आनन्दं ब्रह्मणो विद्वान् न बिभेति कदाचन ॥

TUp II.4

Wherefrom words turn back,
Together with the mind, not having attained –
The bliss of Brahma he who knows,
Fears not at any time at all. (Tr. R.E. Hume)

In spite of its negative characteristics, *brahman* is not non-being, but doubtless being:

असन्नेव स भवति असद् ब्रह्मेति वेद चेत् ।
अस्ति ब्रह्मेति चेद्वेद सन्तमेनं ततो विदुः ॥

TUp II.6

Non-existent (*asat*) himself does one become,
If he knows that Brahma is non-existent.
If one knows that Brahma exists,
Such a one people thereby know as existent. (Tr. R.E. Hume)

Besides Being, *brahman* is also consciousness, bliss and infinity:

ब्रह्मविदाप्नोति परम् । तदेषाभ्युक्ता – सत्यं ज्ञानमनन्तं ब्रह्म । ...

TUp II.1

He who knows *Brahman*, attains the highest !
As to that this (verse) has been declared.
Brahman is Reality, Knowledge and the Infinite ...

(Instead of *ananta* one might accept *ānanda* following Deussen, in view of what follows.) This expression has led to the later Vedānta formula defining *brahman* as *sat-cit-ānanda* ('being, consciousness and bliss'). Similarly the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* states:

विज्ञानमानन्दं ब्रह्म रातिर्दातुः परायणं तिष्ठमानस्य तद्विद इति ॥

BrUp III.9.28

Brahman is consciousness and joy,
the highest reward of the offerer of gifts
and of the one who stands still and knows. (Tr. R. Panikkar)

Brahman is the Real (truth, *satyam*), and it is a great mystery (*mahadyakṣam*, AV X.7.38; BrUp V.4). This is also expressed in the metaphor of the *Kena Upaniṣad* where the gods are not able to grasp the mysterious being (*yakṣa*) (KeUp III–IV). Therefore *brahman* is also called a secret (cf. KathUp V.6ab, *hanta ta idaṃ pravakṣyāmi guhyaṃ brahma sanātanam*).

In continuation of the Vedic *brahmodya*, the Upanisadic dialogues are exploring the nature of *brahman* often through symbolical language, and by continuing the cosmic-ritual-spiritual correspondences and connections. It is at the end of such discussions and meditations that "the one who knows *brahman* becomes *brahman*: *sa yo ha vai tatparamaṃ brahma veda brahmaiva bhavati* (MuṇḍUp III.2.9). The one who renounces desires not only becomes but is *brahman* (cf. BrUp IV.4.6, *brahmaiva san brahmāpyeti*, "being very *brahman*, he goes to *brahman*"). This shows that *brahman* is not an abstract concept, but a living power whose knowledge transforms the knower into the known. This transformation is liberation (*ibid*). More than a transformation, it is the realization that the innermost *ātman* is *brahman*:

स वा एष महानज आत्माऽजरोऽमरोऽमृतोऽभयो ब्रह्म । अभयं वै ब्रह्म । अभयं हि वै ब्रह्म भवति य एवं वेद ॥

BrUp IV.4.25

Verily, that great, unborn Soul, undecaying, undying, immortal, fearless, is Brahma. Verily, Brahma is fearless. He who knows this becomes the fearless Brahma. (Tr. R.E. Hume)

Brahman is the origin, the cause of everything, as well as the ultimate goal, of the nature of bliss (cf. TUp II.6):

यतो वा इमानि भूतानि जायन्ते येन जातानि जीवन्ति । यत्प्रयन्त्यभिसंविशन्ति । तद्विजिज्ञासस्व । तद् ब्रह्मेति । ...

TUp III.1

That, verily, whence beings here are born, that by which when born they live, that into which on deceasing, they enter – that be desirous of understanding. That is Brahma. (Tr. R.E. Hume)

The Śvetāśvatara asks at the very beginning whether *brahman* is the cause of the universe: *kiṃ kāraṇaṃ brahma* (ŚvUp I.1).

Pervasiveness is one of the fundamental characteristics of *brahman*:

ब्रह्मैवेदममृतं पुरस्ताद् ब्रह्म पश्चाद् ब्रह्म दक्षिणतश्चोत्तरेण ।
अधश्चोर्ध्वं च प्रसृतं ब्रह्मैवेदं विश्वमिदं वरिष्ठम् ॥

MuṇḍUp II.2.12

Brahma, indeed, is this immortal. Brahma before,
Brahma behind, to right and to left.
Stretched forth below and above,
Brahma, indeed, is this whole world, this widest extent.
(Tr. R.E. Hume)

In the simile of the **Muṇḍaka**, the *upaniṣad*, or the syllable *OM*, is called the bow, the arrow is the Self, sharpened by meditation, and *brahman* is the mark (*lakṣya*) with which one has to become one (MuṇḍUP II.2.3–4). *Brahman* is indeed the highest goal:

हिरण्मये परे कोशे विरजं ब्रह्म निष्कलम् ।
तच्छुभ्रं ज्योतिषां ज्योतिस्तद्यदात्मविदो विदुः ॥

MuṇḍUp II.2.10

In the highest golden sheath
Is Brahma, without stain, without parts.
Brilliant is It, the light of lights –
That which knowers of the Soul (Ātman) do know! (Tr. R. E. Hume)

The Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad sums up both, the transcendent and immanent aspects of *brahman* and identifies it with *īśa*, the Lord:

ततः परं ब्रह्म परं बृहन्तं यथानिकायं सर्वभूतेषु गूढम् ।
विश्वस्यैकं परिवेष्टितारमीशं तं ज्ञात्वाऽमृता भवन्ति ॥

ŚvUp III.7

Higher than this is Brahma. The Supreme, the Great,
Hidden in all things, body by body,
The One embracer of the universe –
By knowing Him as Lord (*īśa*) men become immortal.
(Tr. R. E. Hume)

This may suffice as examples of the multiple meanings of *brahman* in the Upaniṣads. Leaving aside the significant compounds (e.g. *brahmapura*, *brahmaloka*, cf. also the interesting compounds *brahmagandha*, *brahmarasa*, *brahmatejas*, in KauṣUp I.5), we have to consider the conception of the “two forms of *brahman*”.

द्वे वाव ब्रह्मणो रूपे । मूर्तं चैवामूर्तं च । मर्त्यं चामृतं च । स्थितं च यच्च । सच्च त्यच्च ।

BrUp II.3.1

There are, assuredly, two forms of Brahma:

the formed (*mūrta*) and the formless, the mortal and

the immortal, the stationary and the moving, the actual (*sat*) and the yon (*tya*). (Tr. R. E. Hume)

On the macrocosmic plane, the formed or corporeal (*mūrta*) *brahman* are the cosmic elements, excepting space and wind, which are formless or incorporeal, on the microcosmic plane the sense-organs are *mūrta* and breath and the space within the heart are *amūrta* (BrUp II.3.2-5). The ‘essence’ (*rasa*) of all that is ‘formed’ is the eye, since it is by the eye that one sees forms, macrocosmically it is the sun which makes forms visible. Therefore in the parallel passage in the *Maitrī Upaniṣad* (VI.3) *brahman* is called light (*jyoti*).

There are also “two *brahmans*” with regard to sound:

द्वे वाव ब्रह्मणी अभिध्येये शब्दश्चाशब्दश्च । अथ शब्देनैवाशब्दमाविष्क्रियते अथ तत्रोमिति शब्दः । अनेनोर्ध्वमुत्क्रान्तोऽशब्दे निधनमेति ।

MaitUp VI.22

Verily, there are two Brahmas to be meditated upon: sound and non-sound. Now, non-sound is revealed only by sound. Now, in this case the sound-Brahma is *Om*. Ascending by it, one comes to an end in the non-sound. (Tr. R.E. Hume)

This conception of the two *brahmans* integrates the Vedic meaning with the Upaniṣadic, the first belonging to the realm of sound or form, the second tending to transcend it. The one-sided emphasis on the transcendent aspect in Vedānta (*nirguṇa*) has led to the exclusion of all artistic expression from the realm of *brahman*, whereas both, form ($\rightarrow$ *rūpa*) and sound ($\rightarrow$ *śabda*) are an essential aspect of *brahman* (*saguṇa*). It is only through sound and form that one ascends to the soundless and formless (cf. MaitUp VI.22–23).

Early Buddhism uses the concept of *brahman* (and not only *Brahmā*) in the same sense as the Upaniṣads. “The neuter *brahman* is frequently mentioned in the Pāli Canon as the highest goal of spiritual life” (K. Bhattacharya, 1978, p. 3). In the *Saundarananda* too, *brahman* is said to be the highest object of contemplation (Saun I.15a, II.35c). The Buddha is said to be *brahmabhūta*, ‘become *brahman*’, or

brahmapatta (= *brahmaṣṭrāpta*, cf. KathUp VI.18), 'one who has attained *brahman*', which is equated with *nirvāṇa* (cf. DīghNik III, pp. 232–233, P.T.S.; MajNik I, pp. 341, 386, 411–412, etc.). A frequent phrase describing the *arhat* or the Buddha is: *nicchāto nibbuto sītibhūto sukhāpaṭisaṃvedī brahmabhūtena attanā*, "without craving, appeased, cooled, experiencing joy, with his self become *Brahman*" (DīghNik III.233, etc.). In the Pali Canon *brahman* is not only synonymous with *nirvāṇa*, but also with *dhamma* (*dharma*), because *dharmacakra* is often substituted by *brahmacakra*. *Dhammayāna* and *brahmayāna* are also used as synonyms (cf. MajNik I, pp. 69ff., SaṃNik II, p. 27 and V, p. 5, etc., for more references cf. K. Bhattacharya, art. cit.).

The *Dīgha Nikāya* says about the Tathāgata:

तथागतस्स हेतं, वासेट्ठ, अधिवचनं 'धम्मकायो' इति पि, 'ब्रह्मकायो' इति पि,
'धम्मभूतो' इति पि, 'ब्रह्मभूतो' इति पि ।

DīghNik III, Agaññasutta, 84 (P.T.S.)

One gives the following designations to the Tathāgata: The one who has the *dharma* as his body, or 'who has *brahman* as his body', the one who has become *dharma* or the one who has become *brahman*.

The expression *brahmabhūta* for the liberated one is also used in the *Bhagavad-Gītā*:

योऽन्तः सुखोऽन्तरारामस्तथान्तर्ज्योतिरेव यः ।
स योगी ब्रह्मनिर्वाणं ब्रह्मभूतोऽधिगच्छति ॥

BhG V.24

(cf. also VI.27, XVIII.53–54.)

His joy within, his bliss within, his light within, the man who-is-integrated-in-spiritual-exercise becomes Brahman and draws nigh to Nirvāṇa that is Brahman too. (Tr. R.C. Zaehner)

"The phrase *brahma-bhūta* seems to have been taken on in the *Gītā* in its Buddhist sense of entering a form of existence which is unconditioned by space, time, and causation, the very 'flavour' of Nirvāṇa. The phrase too is common in the *Mahābhārata* in general and is equivalent to 'becoming immortal' (e.g. V.42.5; XII.231.18). Whereas most men become *brahma-bhūta* (this being a synonym of liberation), Krishna is always *brahma-bhūta* (13.6817, 6875)" (R.C. Zaehner, *The Bhagavad-Gītā*, p. 214f.). In short, *brahman* stands for perfection and stability, which is also called *brāhmī sthitiḥ* (BhG II.72):

इहैव तैर्जितः सर्गो येषां साम्ये स्थितं मनः ।
निर्दोषं हि समं ब्रह्म तस्माद् ब्रह्मणि ते स्थिताः ॥

BhG V.19

While yet in this world they have overcome (the process of) emanation (and decay), for their minds are stilled in that-which-is-ever-the-same: for devoid of imperfection and ever-the-same is Brahman: therefore in Brahman (stilled) they stand. (Tr. R.C. Zaehner)

The *Gītā* contains all the various meanings of *brahman*, the Vedic in its relation to sacrifice (*brahma nityam yajñe pratiṣṭhitam*, III.15, also IV.24), the Upanisadic in all its connotations, as well as the Buddhist. *Brahman* is not only the supreme goal (V.6 etc.), it is also the womb of all existence in which the Lord implants the seed, thus it has almost feminine characteristics, close to *prakṛti* (*mama yonir mahadbrahma*, XIV.3). All forms (*mūrtayaḥ*, XIV.4) arise from the great womb of *brahman*.

In the Dharmaśāstra literature, *brahman* has often the meaning of Veda or of the totality of Vedic knowledge (cf. Manu II.116, IV.232–233) or its essence as it is contained in the syllable *OM* (Manu II.83–84, *ekākṣaram paraṁ brahma*, “the monosyllable *OM* is the highest *brahman*”), playing on the meaning of *akṣara* as ‘imperishable’. It certainly retains its meaning as the first cause, the eternal (Manu I.11), as well as the ultimate goal of life (Manu II.82, XII.102, 125), which is best attained through renunciation (Manu VI.71–81). *Brahman* is the highest, eternal principle, which is variously called Agni, Prajāpati, Indra, Prāṇa (Manu XII.123). In the cosmogonic process, *brahman* manifests itself as the creator Brahmā, the ‘grandfather’ of the world (Manu I.7–11).

Among the philosophical systems we shall consider only two which have given prominence to *brahman* in different ways: Bhartṛhari's philosophy of language and Vedānta, both Advaita and Viśiṣṭādvaita.

In the *Vākyapadīya* we find a continuity with the Vedic conception, for “*brahman* kept up its intimate connection with speech, which gave rise to the later speculations on the primordial utterance as the cosmic principle (*śabda-brahman*) and to philosophy of language” (J. Heesterman, art. cit., p. 296). The *Vākyapadīya* starts with the famous verses:

अनादिनिधनं ब्रह्म शब्दतत्त्वं यदक्षरम् ।
विवर्ततेऽर्थभावेन प्रक्रिया जगतो यतः ॥
एकमेव यदाम्नातं भिन्नं शक्तिव्यपाश्रयात् ।
अपृथक्त्वेऽपि शक्तिभ्यः पृथक्त्वेनेव वर्तते ॥

Vāk I.1–2

The Brahman who is without beginning or end, whose very essence is the Word, who is the cause of the manifested phonemes, who appears as the objects, from whom the creation of the world proceeds.

Who has been taught as the One appearing as many due to the multiplicity of his powers, who, though not different from his powers, seems to be so. (Tr. K.A.S. Iyer)

The Vṛtti explains that *brahman*, which is beyond all representation, which has neither beginning nor end, which remains unaffected in all states, is of the nature of the word (*śabda-tattva*) because all its manifestations are determined by language. The same *brahman* which is the word, appears as the objects (*artha*) and though it is apparently diverse, it never loses its original oneness. All the worldly transactions happen in a temporal-spatial sequence, but the underlying unity is never affected. This *brahman* is called *akṣara* because it is imperishable and the cause of all phonemes. The manifestation of the word which is in everybody as one with the spirit is for the purpose of communicating what is within.

The science that is a means to realizing this *brahman* is grammar:

यदेकं प्रक्रियाभेदैर्बहुधा प्रविभज्यते ।
तद् व्याकरणमागम्य परं ब्रह्माधिगम्यते ॥

Vāk I.22

That which, though one, is variously interpreted in the different traditions, that supreme Brahman is attained by a knowledge of Grammar. (Tr. K.A.S. Iyer)

In Advaita Vedānta *brahman* is not related to any manifestation, it is purely and simply the impersonal Absolute which is the sole aim of investigation:

अथातो ब्रह्मजिज्ञासा ॥

BrSū I.1.1

Now, then, the enquiry into *brahman*.

Brahman is the ultimate source of the universe:

जन्माद्यस्य यतः ॥

BrSū I.1.2

(Brahman is that) from which the origin, etc. (i.e. the origin, subsistence and dissolution) of this (world proceed). (Tr. G. Thibaut)

Śaṅkara explains the word *brahman* thus:

अस्ति तावद् ब्रह्म नित्यशुद्धबुद्धमुक्तस्वभावं, सर्वज्ञं, सर्वशक्तिसमन्वितम् । ब्रह्मशब्दस्य हि व्युत्पाद्यमानस्य नित्यशुद्धत्वादयोऽर्थाः प्रतीयन्ते, बृहतेर्धातोर्र्थानुगमात् ।

BrSūSBh I.1.1

Brahman, which is all-knowing and endowed with all powers, whose

essential nature is eternal purity, intelligence and freedom, exists. For if we consider the derivation of the word 'Brahman' from the root *bṛh-*, 'to be great', we at once understand that eternal purity and so on, belong to *Brahman*. (Tr. G. Thibaut)

Brahman is complete in all respects and powers: "The absolutely complete power of *brahman* on the other hand, does not require to be supplemented by any extraneous help (*paripūrṇaśaktikaṃ tu brahma, na tasya anyena kenacit pūrṇatā sampādayitavyā*, BrSūBh II.1.24). Though it is one only, it is contemplated under various symbols (cf. BrSū IV.1.5).

एकमपि हि ब्रह्म विभूतिभेदैरनेकधा उपास्यत इति स्थितिः ।

BrSūŚBh III.3.23

And it is an established fact that *Brahman*, although one only, is, owing to the plurality of its powers, meditated upon in more than one way. (Tr. G. Thibaut)

In continuation of the "two forms of *brahman*" in the Upaniṣads, Śaṅkara also recognizes that it can assume multiplicity through the superimposition of name and form, though being essentially free from all limitations.

द्विरूपं हि ब्रह्म अवगम्यते, नामरूपविकारभेदोपाधिविशिष्टं, तद्विपरीतं च सर्वोपाधिविवर्जितम् ।

BrSūŚBh I.1.12

Brahman is apprehended under two forms; in the first place as qualified by limiting conditions owing to the multiformity of the evolution of name and form (i.e. the multiformity of the created world); in the second place as being the opposite of this, i.e. free from all limiting conditions whatever. (Tr. G. Thibaut)

For the sake of comparison we may see the Viśiṣṭādvaita point of view in Rāmānuja's interpretation of *brahman* in the Śrībhāṣya:

ब्रह्मशब्देन च स्वभावतो निरस्तनिखिलदोषोऽनवधिकातिशयासङ्ख्येयकल्याणगुणगणः पुरुषोत्तमोऽभिधीयते । सर्वत्र बृहत्त्वगुणयोगेन हि ब्रह्मशब्दः । बृहत्त्वं च स्वरूपेण गुणैश्च यत्रानवधिकातिशयम्, सोऽस्य मुख्योऽर्थः । स च सर्वेश्वर एव ।

ŚrīBh on BrSū I.1.1

The word 'Brahman' denotes the highest Person (Puruṣottama) who is essentially free from all imperfections and possesses numberless classes of auspicious qualities of unsurpassable excellence. The term 'Brahman' is applied to any things which possess the quality of greatness (*bṛhattva* from the root *bṛh-*); but primarily denotes that

which possesses greatness, of essential nature as well as of qualities, in unlimited fullness; and such is only the Lord of all.

(Tr. G. Thibaut)

The difference between Śaṅkara's conception of a purely *nirguṇa brahman* and Rāmānuja's theistic identification of *brahman* with God (Puruṣottama or Sarveśvara) as endowed with all qualities (*saguṇa*) is clear. What emerges from this quotation is also the essential neutrality of *brahman* (not only in the grammatical sense), which can be applied to any reality considered to be supreme.

The Vedantic concept of *brahman* in its various connotations has been so pervasive in literatures such as Purāṇas, Epics, Stotras, etc., that only the most significant references can be given. The **Laghu Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha** being an *advaita* work, stresses the nature of *brahman* as equality or harmony (*sama*) in all things:

ब्रह्म चिद् ब्रह्म भुवनं ब्रह्म भूतपरम्परा ।

ब्रह्माहं ब्रह्म मच्छत्रुर्ब्रह्म मन्मित्रबान्धवाः ॥

LYVās np I.47

Brahman is consciousness, the regions, the series of elements. I am *Brahman*, the enemy of mine is Brahman, my friends and relatives are also Brahman. (Tr. H.N. Chakravarty)

Brahman corresponds to a state of absolute peacefulness and desirelessness:

सर्वसङ्कल्पसंशान्तौ प्रशान्तघनवासनम् ।

न किञ्चिद्भावनाकारं तद् ब्रह्म परमं विदुः ॥

LYVās np V.33

The Supreme Brahma is that when there is the absence of meditation. At that state all thoughts are pacified and all desires have terminated in a mass of calmness. (Tr. H.N. Chakravarty)

The relationship between the unity of *brahman* and the multifariousness of the world is expressed in a simile.

रेखोपरेखावलिता यथैका पीवरी शिला ।

तथा त्रैलोक्यवलितं ब्रह्मैकमिति दृश्यताम् ॥

LYVās sp I.5

As a big mountain rock is marked with lines and wrinkles, in the same way Brahman is to be seen as marked with three worlds.

(Tr. H.N. Chakravarty)

The concept of the "two *brahmans*" appears again in the Purāṇas, where

mostly *śabda-brahman*, which is also called the 'lower' (*apara*), refers to the Vedic knowledge, leading to the "higher *brahman*" (cf. AgPur 379.8b–9a; ViPur VI.5.64). The same which is *śabda* and *para*, is also *mūrta* and *amūrta*:

आश्रयश्चेतसो ब्रह्म द्विधा तच्च स्वभावतः ।

भूप मूर्तममूर्तं च परं चापरमेव च ॥

ViPur VI.7.47

The resort of the mind is *brahman*, that has two natural aspects, *mūrta* (with form) known as *apara* (inferior) and *amūrta* (formless) known as *para* (supreme). (Tr. R.S. Bhattacharya)

The idea of *śabdabrahman* is also contained in the Tantras and Āgamas, where it assumes different shades according to the Agamic conception of Absolute and of language. Thus the **Kulārṇava Tantra** gives a short definition of the difference:

शब्दब्रह्मागममयं परं ब्रह्म विवेकजम् ॥

KulT I.9cd

All the Āgamas are the manifest form of *śabdabrahman*, but the supreme *brahman* is conceived by means of discriminative thought. (Tr. H.N. Chakravarty)

Śabdabrahman is also called the body of Śiva (AjitĀ II.6), it is the consciousness in every living being (*caitanyaṃ sarvabhūtānāṃ śabdabrahmeti me matiḥ* – ŚāTil I.13cd). The **Lakṣmī Tantra** calls it a blissful manifestation (*sā sphurattā mahānandā śabdabrahmeti gīyate*, LT XVIII.17).

In the theology of the Śaivāgamas, Śiva himself is the supreme *brahman*, whereas the *śabdabrahman* is his first manifestation, Sadāśiva (cf. AjitĀ I.235.26).

Just as he manifests himself in sound form or *śabda*, Śiva also assumes a visible form for the sake of his worshippers:

चिन्मयस्याप्रमेयस्य निर्गुणस्याशरीरिणः ।

साधकानां हितार्थाय ब्रह्मणो रूपकल्पना ॥

KulT VI.72

Brahman who is all-consciousness, beyond limitations, without having any attribute and without body, yet for the good of the worshipper it is conceived to have a form. (Tr. H.N. Chakravarty)

Just as in Śaivism Śiva is identified with *brahman*, in Vaiṣṇavism it is Viṣṇu (Nārāyaṇa, Kṛṣṇa, etc., cf. LT VIII.4–8).

The **Lakṣmī Tantra** describes it further:

महाविभूतिरित्युक्तो व्याप्तिः सा महती यतः ।

तद् ब्रह्म परमं धाम निरालम्बनभावनम् ॥

LT II.9

The source of that wide diffusion which is called the vast expansion of divine power (*vibhūti*) is *Brahman*, the Ultimate location of that power where consciousness is absolute (lit. where knowledge is free from reference to any object). (Tr. Sanjukta Gupta)

Being the supreme Reality, it is identified with anything that is considered to be supreme, central or transcendent, e.g. with the highest god Śiva:

शिवः सर्वोत्तरः स्थाणुः परमात्मा महेश्वरः ।

सच्चिदानन्दरूपी यः सदसद्व्यक्तिवर्जितः ॥

स एव सर्वगः सद्भिर्ब्रह्मशब्देन शब्दितः ।

AjitĀ kp II.1–2ab

Śiva transcends everything. He is static, the supreme Self, the highest Lord. He is being, consciousness and bliss. He is beyond manifestation either calling it being or non-being. He Himself permeates everything hence by the wise He is called *Brahman*. (Tr.H.N. Chakravarty)

Apart from the acceptance of the Upanisadic concept of *brahman* in the Tantric schools, we also find criticism of the Vedantic idea of the neutral, immobile *brahman*. Thus an anonymous text quoted by Kṣemarāja (comm. on Stavacintāmaṇi 74) ridicules the powerlessness of *brahman*:

नपुंसकमिदं नाथ परं ब्रह्म फलेत् कियत् ।

तत्पौरुषनियोक्त्री चेन्न स्यात्त्वच्छक्तिसुन्दरी ॥

O Lord this supreme *brahman* is neuter, so how can it be fruitful (produce anything) unless it attains masculine power through the rulership of your beautiful Energy (*Śakti*)!

Kṣemarāja also criticizes the inactivity of the Vedantic *brahman*: *vijñānaṃ brahma iti tasyāpi svātantryātmaka spandaśaktiṃ vinā jaḍatvāt*, “The Vedantins say ‘knowledge is Brahman’, but such *Brahman* without the power of *spanda* (creative vibration) in the form of absolute Freedom would be mere lifeless, insentient, inert matter” (SpNir on SpKā I.5, tr. J. Singh).

In Śaiva theology *brahman* has still another meaning when it refers to the five *mantras* and the five faces of Śiva, the so-called *pañcabrahman*, which are: Īśāna, Tatpuruṣa, Aghora, Vāmadeva and Sadyojāta (cf. MṛgĀ kp II.18–19, 278, MPĀ vp VII. 29–30, AghŚP pp. 82–97, etc.).

However, the Tantric idea of *brahman* is also contained in the context of Yoga, which is that of the subtle body. First of all, the body itself is considered to be the abode of the Divine:

आनन्दं ब्रह्मणो रूपं तच्च देहे व्यवस्थितम् ।

KuT V.80ab

The manifest form of *brahman* is bliss and that again has its steady abode in the body. (Tr. H.N. Chakravarty)

The concrete expression of this conception (which in part goes back to the AV) is found in compounds with *brahma* - such as *brahmarandhra*, "the opening (leading to) *brahman*", *brahmadvāra*, "the doorway to *brahman*" or *brahmanāḍī*, both relating to *suṣumnā*, the central nerve (→*nāḍī*) in the human body, as well as *brahmagranthi*, the knot located in the heart centre (cf. HyPrad II.46, 66; III.4-5; IV.70, etc.). The implication of the term *brahma* in these compounds can on the one hand be translated by 'spiritual', insofar as concentration on those centres leads to the realization of *brahman*, on the other hand it denotes 'centrality', external as well as internal.

Apart from yogic physiology, there is a purely mystical meaning of *brahman*, which can be experienced in various states, as described, e.g. in *Vijñāna Bhairava* (vv.38, 91, 118). What the Tantra describes as *brahmasattāmayī daśā* (ViBhai 118) could again be translated by "absolute spiritual state."

Manifestation in the Arts

In the context of the arts there are three main fields where the concept of *brahman* (and *Brahmā* as its creative personification) has played an important role:

1. In the field of aesthetics and poetics, 2. In the field of sound and music, and 3. In a spatial sense in the fields of theatre, architecture and sculpture.

In aesthetics or art-theory, which has grown out of poetics, it is the aesthetic experience itself, lit. called the "tasting of *rasa*" (*rasāsvāda*, →*rasa*) which is compared to the experience of *brahman* or mystical experience (*brahmāsvāda*).

"Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka was perhaps the first to associate aesthetic experience with mystical experience. The aesthetic state of consciousness is no longer associated with the limited "I"; during the aesthetic experience the subject is completely absorbed in the object contemplated, and the whole of the reality which surrounds him disappears from his view. The same thing *mutatis mutandis* occurs in mystical experience; in this sense, aesthetic experience is similar (*savidha*,

sabrahmacārīn, sahodara) to experience of the Absolute or of the brahman" (R. Gnoli, *The Aesthetic Experience According to Abhinavagupta*, p. 48, note 1).

According to Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka, aesthetic experience (*rasa*) and ecstatic experience of *brahman* are both identical, both being modalities of consciousness, assuming the form of *brahman*. The *yogin* comes to learn that the world of name and form is unreal and thus realizes *brahman*. The *sahṛdaya rasika* also realises the same ultimate principle in terms of the ecstasy he experiences through poetry and drama. In both, the experience is of the nature of light, bliss and restfulness of consciousness. Such restfulness of consciousness is *śāntarasa*.

Abhinavagupta speaks about it in the context of *rasa*:

तस्मात् काव्ये रसःसत्त्वोद्रेकप्रकाशानन्दमयनिजसंविद्विश्रान्तिलक्षणेन
परब्रह्मास्वादसविधेन भोगेन परं भुज्यते ।

AbhiBhā on NŚ VI.31 (cf. also DhvĀLLoc II.4)

This enjoyment ... is characterized by a resting (*viśrānti*) in one's own consciousness (*saṃvit*), which due to the emergent state of *sattva*, is pervaded by beatitude (*ānanda*) and light (*prakāśa*), and is similar to the tasting (*āsvāda*) of the supreme *brahman*.

(Tr. R. Gnoli)

The *savikalpa samādhi* of the *yogin* and the *rasa* experience of the *sahṛdaya* are of the same quality because the distinction between subject-object (*viśayī-viśaya*) exists no longer in them. Both are in a state of *vyutthāna*, i.e. of active subliminal impression. Even as the *yogin* returns to external consciousness after *savikalpa samādhi*, the *rasika* also reverts to it after experience of *rasa*.

The differences between the two kinds of experience may be described as follows: During the *brahman*-experience, the *yogin* transcends all dualities, e.g. space-time, unmodified-modified, joy-sorrow. He is beyond every modality of consciousness, i.e. beyond the transactional world, and abides in himself. For the aesthete the experience is but momentary, however prominent the *ānanda* may be. He has to return to the world of name and form. In other words, objects, processes and the space-time frame do not disappear whereas they do in *brahmānanda*. The *yogin*'s experience is pervasive, unhampered, incessant and without the ups and downs of referential consciousness. Such experience is therefore absolute (*kevala*). However, the *yogin* is in search of a principle, a state of Being, an experience which is not inherent to, or implicit within the orb of his normal life. On the other hand, the roots and parameters of the experience of aesthetic joy of the *sahṛdaya* lie well within the scope and scan of worldly experience. To this extent, therefore, it is self sufficient.

Viśvanātha later summarizes the same idea in his *Sāhitya-Darpaṇa*:

सत्त्वोद्रेकादखण्डस्वप्रकाशानन्दचिन्मयः ।
 वेद्यान्तरस्पर्शशून्यब्रह्मास्वादसहोदरः ॥
 लोकोत्तरचमत्कारप्राणः कैश्चित् प्रमातृभिः ।
 स्वाकारवदभिन्नत्वेनायमास्वाद्यते रसः ॥

SāDar III.2-3

Pure aesthetic experience is theirs in whom the knowledge of ideal beauty is innate; it is known intuitively, in intellectual ecstasy without accompaniment of ideation, at the highest level of conscious being; born of one mother with the vision of God, its life is as it were a flash of blinding light of transmundane origin, impossible to analyze, and yet in the image of our very being. (Tr. A.K. Coomaraswamy)

The analogy between the aesthetic and the mystical experience has thus two aspects: similarity and difference. The similarity lies in a state of ecstasy, of wonder (→ *camatkāra*), of absorption, concentration and rest (*nirveśa*, *samāpatti*, *viśrānti*, *laya*), and in a dissolution of the mental limitations which gives access to a blissful state of consciousness, in which one forgets oneself. If Bhartṛhari has described the state of realization of *brahman* as a complete transcending of the knots of 'I' and 'mine' (*mamāhamityahaṅkāragranthisamatikrama-mātraṃ brahmaṇaḥ prāptiḥ* – Vṛ on Vāk I.5), something similar happens to one who is completely absorbed in seeing a dramatic performance, listening to music, etc. The difference between the two is that the aesthetic or *rasa*-tasting experience is temporary whereas the mystical experience is a real and permanent state. Mahimabhaṭṭa describes it thus:

पाठादथ ध्रुवगानात् ततः संपूरिते रसे ।
 तदास्वादभरैकाग्रो हृष्यत्यन्तर्मुखः क्षणम् ॥
 ततो निर्विषयस्यास्य स्वरूपावस्थितौ निजः ।
 व्यज्यते ह्लादनिष्यन्दो येन तुष्यन्ति योगिनः ॥

VyVive p. 94

Dramatic performance and the music accompanying them feed the *Rasa* in all its fullness; hence the spectator, absorbed in the tasting of this, turning inward, feels pleasure through the whole performance. Sunk into his own being, he forgets everything (pertaining to practical life). There is manifested in him that flow of inborn pleasure, from which the yogins draw their satisfaction.

(Tr. R. Gnoli)

The aesthetic experience can thus become a step towards, or a reminder of the *brahman*-experience, both springing from the same source (cf. R. Gnoli). But the analogy works both ways: "A plenitude [which is *rasa*] that suggests to

Abhinava a theologian of note, the analogy between *rasāsvāda* and *brahmāsvāda*, which differ only in terms of the 'impermanence' of the former. The door is thus opened to theological interpretations of aesthetics, or more importantly, to aesthetic interpretations of theology" (E. Gerow, *Indian Poetics*, p. 268). One school which has made full use of this analogy is Bengal Vaisnavism, e.g.: "Rūpa Gosvāmin appears to state the relation [between *rasāsvāda* and *brahmāsvāda*] as a true equivalence, thus cancelling the separation between the religious domain and the play" (E. Gerow, op. cit., p. 285). But even in certain aspects of Tantrism, the oneness of the experience of *rasa* and of *brahman* is implied:

चिरं जीवन्नेष क्षपितपशुपाशव्यतिकरः परब्रह्माभिख्यं रसयति रसं त्वद्भजनवान् ॥

SL 99cd

... Long living, he dissolves the union of soul and bond and savors the sweetness called supreme *brahman* – he, your devotee.

(Tr. W. Norman Brown)

Thus in the context of aesthetics, *brahman* refers to a state of experience corresponding to → *mokṣa*.

The second field where *brahman* has served as a basic concept is music. Here the original Vedic meaning of sound (word) and of the *śabdabrahman* has re-emerged in the concept of *nādabrahman*, the absolute sound-principle:

चैतन्यं सर्वभूतानां विवृत्तं जगदात्मना ।

नादब्रह्म तदानन्दमद्वितीयमुपास्महे ॥

SR I.3.1

We worship *nāda-brahman*, that incomparable bliss which is immanent in all the creatures as intelligence and is manifest in the phenomenon of this universe. (Tr. R.K. Shringy and P.L. Sharma)

The *Śaṅgīta-Ratnākara* defines *brahman* in Vedantic terms (SR I.2.4–5) and also uses the term in a yogic sense (e.g. *brahmagranthi*, SR I.1.1). The *nādabrahman* is the ultimate principle of sound, the source of the delight of music (and in this sense it is close to the aesthetic concept). Its complementary concept would be the *saṅgītapuruṣa* (→ *puruṣa*) as the principle of structural unity of the art-form, the relationship of these two concepts being similar to the Vedic *brahman* – *puruṣa*, the first being the transcendent ground, the inner power, manifested in the word, the second being the organic structure or totality.

Another manifestation of *brahman* (n.) or *brahman* (*brahmā*, m.) occurs in space-divisions and spatial terms as applied in theatre, in architecture and sculpture. Here the following compounds are used: *brahmasthāna*, *brahmamaṇḍala*, *brahmakṣetra*, *brahmasūtra*, *brahmabindu*, etc. Whether the first part of the com-

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pound is taken to be neuter or masculine, the basic meaning does not change, only in the case of the masculine it is the creative (cosmogonic) aspect that is in the foreground. The implications of *brahma* in this context can be summarized as denoting, (a) the concept of centrality: horizontally or vertically, concentrated in one point ($\rightarrow$ *bindu*) or spread out in a field; (b) the concept of pervasiveness (*vyāpti*) which is related to the first aspect, since it is from a dynamic centre of power that the radiation goes outward.

In Nāṭya the centre of the stage is called *brahmamaṇḍala* and "in accordance with the cosmic meaning of the various parts of the stage after its consecration (NŚ III.20ff.) this part represents the cosmic centre and Brahmā's seat (*brāhma maṇḍala*)" (F.B.J. Kuiper, *Ancient Indian Cosmogony*, p. 240). In the *pūrvaraṅga* ritual preceding the performance proper, the *jarjara* is erected in this centre and worshipped (cf. NŚ V.71ff.). "The *jarjara* represents the world tree", thus the symbolism of the *skambha*, which had been identified with *brahman* (cf. AV X.7.17) is re-enacted. Thus "Brahmā is himself established at the centre of the stage" (NŚ I.95: *raṅgapīthasya madhye tu svayaṃ brahma pratiṣṭhitah*, cf. also III.23, consecration of the playhouse). *Brahmā* is also the propounder of the Nāṭyaveda (cf. NŚ I.1). "It is Brahmā who, as the grandfather of the world (*lokāpitāmaha*), is actually the highest god. He is the creator of dramatic art and to him, as a god of the totality, the *maṇḍala* in the centre of the stage is dedicated. This cosmic centre, however, is also the place where the world tree was believed to be standing" (F.B.J. Kuiper, op. cit., p. 241). We cannot pursue this symbolism here, which is also extended to the *sūtradhāra* and his "functional identity with the god of the centre" (op. cit., p. 244).

This symbolism of the centre is equally important in the ritual *maṇḍala*, in town planning and architecture. In all these, the central field of the *maṇḍala* is called *brahmasthāna* (cf. AghŚP p. 206f; MṛgĀ kp III.34, VII.29b). In ritual, the main deity is worshipped in the *brahmasthāna*. In the *vāstupuruṣamaṇḍala* ($\rightarrow$ *puruṣa*), preceding the building of a house or temple, the centre of the diagram, consisting of one, four or nine squares, is dedicated to *brahman* (*brahmā*, cf. BrSam LIII.46, 55, 66, etc.). It is called the 'heart' of the body of the *puruṣa* (*hṛdaye brahma*, BrSam LIII.54) and thus has to be guarded carefully, for hurting the heart means hurting the whole body (cf. also Mayam VII.40, 43, 49-56).

In town-planning too, the central part of the layout is dedicated to *brahman* (Brahmā) and it is either left as open space or used for a meeting-place, *maṇḍapa*, etc. (cf. Mayam IX.61ff.). Thus also the central road of the village is called *brahmavīthi* and is called the 'navel' of the village (cf. Mayam IX.37).

But not only a central field of any diagram is named as *brahma*- (*kṣetra* etc.), it is also the central vertical line in any composition that is termed *brahmasūtra*. In fact, the drawing of any ritual or compositional diagram ($\rightarrow$ *yantra*, $\rightarrow$

maṇḍala) starts from the *brahmabindu* (central point) and is extended as *brahmasūtra*. The symbolism of the *brahmasūtra* in the abstract diagram, ground-plan or in the standing sculpture is related to the cosmic axis ($\rightarrow$ *skambha*) and to the yogic physiology of the *brahmanāḍī* terminating in *brahmarandhra*. The *Vāstusūtra Upaniṣad*, which deals with the composition of sculpture, calls it *brahmakīla*, thus relating it to the post or peg.

ब्रह्मकीलाधारः, ब्रह्मकीलेन सह क्षेत्रं विभाजय ॥

ब्रह्मकीलमध्यगरेखया द्वैतांशे ब्रह्मकीलेन सह क्षेत्रं विभाजयन्ति । यथा धरायां मेरुकीलं पशौ पृष्ठास्थि, वृक्षे सुषीरं, जीवे जीवात्मा, तथा रेखा हि सत्यम् ।

VSUp IV.26

The middle-line (*brahmakīla*) is the support, and the field (panel) should be divided by this middle line.

They divide the field (panel) in two parts by the *brahmakīla* which is the vertical middle-line, like the post of mount Meru (*merukīla*) on the earth, like the backbone in the animal, like the marrow of the tree, like the soul in the living being. Thus the line is verily a fundamental reality (*satyam*). (Tr. A. Boner and B. Bäumer)

The text reflects the identity of *brahman* with *satyam*, while giving it a concrete shape as the two points dominating the compositional diagram (VSUp VI. 11–12). The *brahmabindu* is not only the centre, it represents the very stability of the composition or image based on it (*bindurbrahmeva brahmadhruvam*, VSUp VI.11).

This may suffice to show the spatial symbolism involved in the names forming a compound with *brahma-*, implying the ideas of centrality, pervasiveness, immobility or stability as well as creative power and ascension to the Divine.

Apart from these implied meanings, the creation of art itself, whether *nāṭya* in the *Nāṭya-Śāstra*, or *citra* (painting, sculpture), is ascribed to Brahmā, the creator. Thus the **Citra-Lakṣaṇa** of Nagnajit describes the origin of *citra* where Brahmā himself instructs the king in the art of painting:

‘You should paint handsomely a picture resembling the (dead) son of the Brahman, corresponding to his form, and with the help of colours; this is certain to lead to your salvation!’ After Brahma had thus spoken, the judicious king said: ‘May it be granted to me to behold this boy of the Brahman!’ Upon this he painted him: Brahma let him, such as he was (as he was painted) rise again, and gifted him as living person to the Brahman.

CiL 170–220

(Tr. B. Laufer, B.N. Goswami, A.I.D. Dallapiccola)

This story illustrates the creative power of art, bestowed on it by the creator himself.

Conclusion

Brahman, in spite of being transcendent, all-pervasive and beyond the grasp of sense- and mental faculties, has pervaded all the fields of art in one way or another. It is not only the source and centre of all manifestation, but also the goal to which any kind of artistic expression wants to lead, as e.g. the perfect singing of the *sāman* chant:

यथाविधानेन पठन्सामगायमविच्युतम् ।

सावधानस्तदध्यासात्परं ब्रह्माधिगच्छति ॥

YājSm III.112

By studying according to the prescribed rules the singing of the *Sāma* without a flaw, and with close attention, by its study he reaches over to the highest Brahma. (Tr. J.R. Gharpure)

Thus the goal of art is ultimately the fullness of blissful experience which is only comparable to the "tasting of the Absolute" (*brahmāsvāda*).

Bettina Bäumer

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PURUṢA

Overview

Puruṣa (m.): 'Man', 'person', denotes either the male or the total human being, the original man, the primordial cosmic Person, also the inner Spirit or Self.

The concept of *puruṣa* or Man in all its dimensions, has served as the archetypal model of micro-macrocosmic relationships. Having a body, the *puruṣa* encompasses both, the parts (the limbs) and the whole. He has, an organic structure, and at the same time he is the indwelling spirit. In the sense of the supreme Being, as *puruṣottama*, he serves the conception of divinity, especially in Vaiṣṇava theology. In the human sense he is the ideal man: *mahāpuruṣa*, 'great man', an epithet applied also to the Buddha, or *yugaṭpuruṣa*, the ideal man in each *yuga* or age.

In the Veda *puruṣa* is linked with cosmogony, anthropogony and with the sacrifice, but in the philosophy of Sāṃkhya he is dissociated from creation and remains an inactive and isolated witness, soul or spirit, as distinguished from primal Nature or → *prakṛti*.

Though philosophically close to the concepts of → *brahman* and → *ātman*, as all-pervading primordial Being and indwelling Self, the *puruṣa* is more connected with form (→ *rūpa*), especially with the human form. However, he embraces both, the immanent as well as transcendent reality.

In the different arts, the *puruṣa* embodies a unifying principle of form, integrating the constituent parts of the particular art-form to the whole. He is both the measure and the measured. But it is also the very concept of creativity in the arts which is related to the *puruṣa* in his identification with cosmogony and with the sacrifice. *Puruṣa* thus serves as a model or archetype which is made manifest in the arts.

Etymology and Related Words

Of uncertain origin, the formation of *puruṣa* is similar to *mānuṣa* (human being, 'Mensch'). In the Veda it has often the form *pūruṣa*, (cf. KāVṛ VI.3.137), *purisa* in Pali and Prakrit. The Indian exegetes derive it mostly in two ways: from the root *pr-*, to fill, and from the word *pur*, castle or city, combined with the roots *sad-*, to sit in, or *śī-*, to rest.

पुरुषः पुरि षादः । पुरि शयः । पूरयतेर्वा । पूरयत्यन्तरित्यन्तरपुरुषमभिप्रेत्य ।

यस्मात्परं नापरमस्ति किञ्चिद् यस्मान्नाणीयो न ज्यायोऽस्ति किञ्चित् ।

वृक्ष इव स्तब्धो दिवि तिष्ठत्येकस्तेनेदं पूर्णं पुरुषेण सर्वम् ॥

Nir II.3

Puruṣaḥ (person) = *puri śādaḥ* (one who sits in a city), or = *puriśayaḥ* (one who sleeps in a city), or is derived from (the root) *pr-* (to fill), i.e. he fills the interior, with reference to the inner soul.

This entire (universe) is filled by that inner soul, to whom there is nothing anterior, nothing subsequent, than whom there is nothing more minute, nor more great, and immovable like a tree, who alone lives in heaven. (Tr. L. Sarup)

Another possible derivation is ascribed to the Nairuktas, i.e. *pur* with the root *vās*, to dwell (*puri vasatīti puruṣaḥ iti nairuktāḥ*, UṇSū IV.74).

This double derivation already implies an interpretation which continues throughout the Indian tradition: (a) the idea of 'filling', thus of fullness and totality, (b) *pur*, castle or city is mostly understood to denote the (human) body, thus the notion of an indwelling soul is implied – filling a body and the cosmos, understood as a macro-organism.

Puruṣa also denotes the grammatical person, e.g. *prathama puruṣa* is the third person. In the sense of the male it is synonymous to *pums* (*pumān*) and *nara*, and it can also have the meaning of an officer or servant (*rājapuruṣa* is 'the king's servant', Nir II.3). The abstract derivation *puruṣatā*, 'manhood', 'manliness', in a 'human manner', has been known since the *R̥gveda* (VII.57.4). The form *puruṣatvatā* is found in the *Maitrāyaṇī Saṃhitā* (IV.10.3; RV V.48.5).

Though in many contexts it has become a highly abstract concept, at one level transcending the limitations of gender, at the concrete level the word *puruṣa* remains invariably connected with the masculine gender.

In compounds, too, the meaning can be either the human being (e.g. *puruṣārtha*, human goal), or a demonic being (e.g. *vāstupuruṣa*) or the divine Person (e.g. *puruṣottama*).

There are other 'popular etymologies' out of which we may quote only the definition of the *Taittirīya Āraṇyaka*, as quoted in the commentary on the *Viṣṇu-Sahasranāma* attributed to Śaṅkara:

आसीत् पुरा पूर्वमेवेति विग्रहं कृत्वा व्युत्पादितः पुरुषः ।

'पूर्वमेवाहमिहासमिति तत् पुरुषस्य पुरुषत्वम् ।' (तै.आ. १.२३) इति श्रुतेः ॥

ViSahasrBh 14 (cf. 406)

It would give this meaning, namely, He who existed (*āsīt*, *as-* to exist) before (*purā*) everything. The *śruti* (TĀr I.23) says: 'I indeed existed here before; as I existed before, I am called Puruṣa.' (Tr. R.A. Sastry)

The three basic meanings according to traditional exegesis could therefore be summarized as: filling, indwelling, being at the origin.

Layers of Meaning

Puruṣa as a concept (not in its ordinary meaning of 'Man') retains its mythical association with the 'universal Man' as described in the *Puruṣasūkta* (RV X.90) and it thus contains the possibility of growing in macro- and micro-dimensions. It implies the capacity of embracing the cosmos on the one side and of becoming pure interiority on the other. The idea of fullness (*pūrṇatā*) associated with its traditional etymology remains one of the core meanings, but not an unstructured, pervasive totality, as in the case of *brahman*. Rather, the *puruṣa* is fullness in the structure of human form, possessing measure and dimension (*puruṣa* as measure). *Puruṣa* has a body, but cannot be reduced to a body (→ *śarīra*), for he is often called bodiless (*Upaniṣads*) and pure spirit (*Sāṃkhya*). Symbolically speaking he is the cosmic giant on the one side and the inner dwarf (*vāmana*), the inner man measuring the size of a thumb (*aṅguṣṭhamātra*) on the other.

Metaphysically speaking, the *puruṣa* is both transcendent and immanent (in post-Vedic terms: *Viśvottīrṇa* and *viśvamaya*). The *Puruṣasūkta* expresses these two dimensions by saying that the *puruṣa* "pervades the earth and yet extends beyond it by ten fingers' breadth" (RV X.90.1cd, *sa bhūmiṃ viśvato vṛtvā'tyatiṣṭhaddaśāṅgulam*). In other words, the *puruṣa* contains the possibilities of abstraction as well as concreteness, of metaphysical and physical reality and he thus acts as a bridge between the two.

When considering the different dimensions of the concept, the simple twofold differentiation is that of the perishable (*kṣara*), i.e. mortal man, and the imperishable (*akṣara*), the universal or divine Person. Anthropological levels are introduced by the **Taittirīya Upaniṣad** (III.1–5) with the five 'sheaths' (*kośa*, the *Upaniṣad* itself calls them the five *puruṣas*), from the external, physical level to the innermost dimension of man, these are: *annamaya* (consisting of food), *prāṇamaya* (consisting of life-breath), *manomaya* (consisting of mind), *vijñānamaya* (consisting of consciousness) and *ānandamaya* (consisting of bliss).

In his relation to space and time, *puruṣa* is in his mythological as well as anthropological meaning not only in space, but even the (or a) measure of space. His relation to time depends on the cosmogonic and ritual process, as well as on the human process of growth.

We have thus seen that *puruṣa* is form and structure as well as formless and transcendent. He is often identified with *brahman*, e.g.:

यत्तत्कारणमव्यक्तं नित्यं सदसदात्मकम् ।
तद्विसृष्टः स पुरुषो लोके ब्रह्मेति कीर्त्यते ॥

Manu I.11

From that (first) cause, which is indiscernible, eternal, and both real and unreal, was produced that male (*puruṣa*), who is famed in this world (under the appellation of) Brahman. (Tr. G. Bühler)

Development of the Concept

The *Puruṣasūkta* of the *R̥gveda* (X.90) reveals the archetypal Man, the origin and personification of the universe and of society, who is coextensive with the universe and yet transcends it:

सहस्रशीर्षा पुरुषः सहस्राक्षः सहस्रपात् ।
स भूमिं विश्वतो वृत्वाऽत्यतिष्ठदशाङ्गुलम् ॥
पुरुष एवेदं सर्वं यद्भूतं यच्च भव्यम् ।
उतामृतत्वस्येशानो यदन्नेनातिरोहति ॥
एतावानस्य महिमाऽतो ज्यायाँश्च पूरुषः ।
पादोऽस्य विश्वा भूतानि त्रिपादस्यामृतं दिवि ॥

RV X.90.1-3

A thousand-headed is the Man
with a thousand eyes, a thousand feet;
encompassing the Earth all sides,
he exceeded it by ten fingers' breadth.

The Man, indeed, is this All,
what has been and what is to be,
the Lord of the immortal spheres
which he surpasses by consuming food.

Such is the measure of his might,
and greater still than this is Man.

All beings are a fourth of him,
three fourths are the immortal in heaven. (Tr. R. Panikkar)

The number 'one thousand' implies the infinite potentiality of the primeval Being, which later found expression in the vision of the *Viśvarūpa* (cf. *BhG XI* and iconography of *Viśvarūpa*). The 'ten fingers' breadth' has been interpreted

variously and has also been related to the iconography of the Buddha whose head is topped by the *uṣṇīṣa*, the symbolical protuberance, and even to the → *stūpa* which corresponds to the body of the Buddha as *mahāpuruṣa* (P. Mus, M. Benisti). Equally important is the symbolism of the division into four, consisting of three-plus-one, the immanent dimension being only one-fourth of the total *puruṣa* whose three other parts are transcendent. The four, as the four feet of the cosmic cow and the four parts of speech (*vāc*), represents here totality.

The *puruṣa* brings forth the feminine principle *virāj* and enters into an androgynous union with her (RV X.90.5).

In order to bring about the differentiation of creation, the *puruṣa* himself is sacrificed and his body is divided up. Only by means of this primordial sacrifice the four Vedas, the animals, the classes of men and the cosmic elements were born. These correspondences between the parts of his body and the elements pervade the entire Indian conception of the micro-macrocosmic relationships:

चन्द्रमा मनसो जातश्चक्षोः सूर्यो अजायत ।
 मुखादिन्द्रश्चाग्निश्च प्राणाद्वायुरजायत ॥
 नाभ्या आसीदन्तरिक्षं शीर्ष्णो द्यौः समवर्तत ।
 पद्भ्यां भूमिर्दिशः श्रोत्रात् तथा लोकाँ अकल्पयन् ॥

RV X.90.13-14

The Moon was born from his mind; the Sun
 came into being from his eye;
 from his mouth came Indra and Agni,
 while from his breath the Wind was born.

From his navel issued the Air;
 from his head unfurled the Sky,
 the Earth from his feet, from his ear the four directions.
 Thus have the worlds been organized. (Tr. R. Panikkar)

In relation to the Vedic gods like Agni, Sūrya or Viṣṇu, the *puruṣa* is an "abstraction remaining anonymous ... 'the Man' " (P. Mus). Differentiation and creation are only possible by way of the sacrifice, hence the *puruṣa* is often equated with *yajña* whose personification he is.

Actually it is his body which represents an "organic rather than mechanical character of the structure... of the individual, of society and of the universe" (P. Mus). His body is the universal model and measure: "The cosmic theme of the *puruṣa* is a theme of measure. Man is measured by the cosmos and, vice-versa, the cosmos is measured by the archetypal body of the *puruṣa*" (P. Mus, p. 560).

In the Brāhmaṇas, the cosmogonic role of the *puruṣa* has been transferred to the creator god Prajāpati whose self-immolation and dismemberment creates

the world. This sacrifice of *puruṣa*-Prajāpati is not only creative, but also re-creative in the sense that his body is reconstructed, death is overcome and immortality is attained. One of the symbols of the *puruṣa* is the 'golden Man' (*hiraṇmaya puruṣa*) who is buried in the centre under the first layer of the fire altar (*agniciti*). Though this may be reminiscent of an earlier human sacrifice, the golden figure signifies the sun and immortality. *Puruṣa* (man) is also called the first and foremost victim of the sacrifice, to be substituted successively by the horse, the ox, the sheep and the goat (cf. ŚBr I.2.3.6, etc.). Whether or not human sacrifice was performed in Vedic times, this is related to the fact that the sacrificer (*yajamāna*) is identified with the sacrificial victim (cf. TSam VI.6.4.4–5, etc.). The identification of *puruṣa*-Prajāpati with the sacrifice (→ *yajña*) thus implies a process of immolation and recreation, of transformation. It is an act of creation which implies measuring (root *mi*):

पुरुषो वै यज्ञस्तेनेदं सर्वं मितम् ।

ŚBr X.2.1.2

The *puruṣa* is verily sacrifice, by which all this is measured (created).

The other root used in this context is *tan-*, to spread out, to stretch, to weave:

पुरुषो वै यज्ञः । पुरुषस्तेन यज्ञः – यदेनं पुरुषस्तनुते । एष वै तायमानो यावानेव पुरुषस्तावान् विधीयते, तस्मात् पुरुषो यज्ञः ।

ŚBr I.3.2.1

Man is indeed the sacrifice. Sacrifice is Man, because it is man who offers it (lit. stretches it), and each time that he offers it, it has the size of man. Therefore, Man is the sacrifice.

This idea is developed further in the Upaniṣads where even the life-time of a man is compared to a sacrifice (cf. ChUp III.16, BrUp VI.2.2–4, JaimUpBr IV.2).

It is the divisioning of the body of the *puruṣa* which leads to his becoming a measure (cf. TSam V.2.5.1) and since the Veda, art has to do with measure:

पाङ्क्तं छन्दः पुरुषो बभूव विश्वैर्विश्वाङ्गैः सह सं भवेम ॥

AV XII.3.10cd

The Man became the five-divisioned metre. May we abide with all our members perfect. (Tr. R.T.H. Griffith)

The five *pādas* of the *pañkti* metre are compared to the five parts or layers of the human body (hair, skin, flesh, bones and marrow, cf. AitBr II.14). In another context also the *puruṣa* is said to be fivefold, which has a cosmic-spatial meaning:

स वा एष पुरुषः पञ्चधा पञ्चात्मा येन सर्वमिदं प्रोतं पृथिवी चान्तरिक्षं च द्यौश्च
दिशश्चावान्तरदिशश्च स वै सर्वमिदं जगत् ॥ स भूतं स भव्यं ... तमस उपरिष्ठात् ।
तमेवं मनसा हृदा च भूयो न मृत्युमुपयाहि विद्वान् ।

MNUp XXIII.1, XXIV.1

The *Puruṣa* is fivefold, with five souls, by whom all this (universe) is pervaded: earth, midspace, heaven, the space-directions and intermediate quarters. He is verily this whole world, what was and what will be ... he is beyond darkness. Knowing him with mind and heart, the wise does not move to death again.

The **Atharvaveda** (X.2) contains a hymn consisting mostly of questions regarding the nature of the *puruṣa* both 'humanity personified' (R.T.H. Griffith) and the Supreme Being. It starts with the formation of his body, but contains all the aspects of Man's life.

को अस्मिन् रूपमदधात् को मह्यानं च नाम च ।

गातुं को अस्मिन् कः केतुं कश्चरित्राणि पूरुषे ॥

AV X.2.12

Who gave him visible form and shape? Who gave him magnitude and name?

Who gave him motion, consciousness? Who furnished Pūruṣa with feet? (Tr. R.T.H. Griffith)

Music and dance are also mentioned as aspects of his life:

मेधां को अस्मिन्नध्यौहत् को बाणं को नृतो दधौ ॥

AV X.2.17cd

Who gave him intellect besides? Who gave him voice and gestic power? (Tr. R.T.H. Griffith)

In spite of all the human traits, he is the all-pervading Spirit. His name is again defined in relation to *pur*, castle:

ऊर्ध्वो नु सृष्टास्तिर्यङ् नु सृष्टाः सर्वा दिशः पुरुष आ बभूवाँ ।

पुरं यो ब्रह्मणो वेद यस्याः पुरुष उच्यते ॥

AV X.2.28

Stationed on high, *Puruṣa* has pervaded all regions spread aloft and stretched transversely.

He who knows *Brahma's* castle, yea, the fort whence *Puruṣa* is named. (Tr. R.T.H. Griffith)

This 'castle' which is the human (and divine) body is already described as a

'mystical body', the *brahmaṇḍa*, whose development will be found in the Upanisadic and Tantric concept of the body with its openings and *cakras*:

अष्टाचक्रा नवद्वारा देवानां पूरयोध्या ।

तस्यां हिरण्ययः कोशः स्वर्गो ज्योतिषावृतः ॥

AV X.2.31

The fort of Gods, impregnable with circles eight and portals nine.

Contains a golden treasure-chest, celestial, begirt with light.

(Tr. R.T.H. Griffith)

Puruṣa is here the all-embracing archetype, containing the physical, cosmic, and spiritual realities all in one.

The Upaniṣads contain the same hermeneutics of the name *puruṣa*, implying more his indwelling nature:

पुरश्चक्रे द्विपदः पुरश्चक्रे चतुष्पदः ।

पुरः स पक्षी भूत्वा पुरः पुरुष आविशदिति ॥

स वा अयं पुरुषः सर्वासु पूर्षु पुरिषयः । नैनै किंचनानावृतम् । नैनै किंचनासंवृतम् ॥

BrUp II.5.18

Citadels with two feet he did make.

Citadels with four feet he did make.

Into the citadels he, having become a bird –

Into the citadels (*purāṣ*) the Person (*puruṣa*) entered.

This, verily is the person (*puruṣa*) dwelling in all cities (*purīṣaya*).

There is nothing by which he is not covered, nothing by which he is not hid. (Tr. R.E. Hume)

Though the Upaniṣads tend to spiritualize *puruṣa* as the inner soul or spirit, he never loses his anthropomorphic nature: *puruṣavidha*, 'of human form'.

आत्मैवेदमग्र आसीत् पुरुषविधः । सोऽनुवीक्ष्य नान्यदात्मनोऽपश्यत् । सोऽहमस्मीत्यग्रे व्याहरत् । ततोऽहं नामाभवत् । तस्मादप्येतद्द्वामन्त्रितोऽहमयमित्येवाग्र उक्त्वाऽथान्यत्राम प्रब्रूते यदस्य भवति । स यत् पूर्वोऽस्मात् सर्वस्मात् सर्वान् पाप्मन औषत् तस्मात् पुरुषः ॥

BrUp I.4.1

In the beginning this world was Soul (*Ātman*) alone in the form of a Person. Looking around, he saw nothing else than himself. He said first: 'I am'. Thence arose the name 'I'. Therefore, even today, when one is addressed he says first just 'It is I' and then speaks whatever name he has. Since before (*pūrva*) all this world he burned up

(uṣ-) all evils, therefore, he is a person (*puruṣa*). (Tr. R.E. Hume)

Here another 'popular etymology' of *puruṣa* is implied: 'The one who burns evil at the beginning.' This 'form of a person' pervades the five 'layers' (*kośas*) constituting the human being according to the **Taittirīya Upaniṣad** (I.1-5), of which each succeeding form is interior to the preceding one and 'fills it': *annamaya* (material), *prāṇamaya* (vital), *manomaya* (mental), *vijñānamaya* (conscious) and *ānandamaya* (blissful). Each of these 'bodies' of the *puruṣa* has its own limbs, corresponding to the actual body: *sa vā eṣa puruṣavidha eva, tasya puruṣavidhatām anvayaṃ puruṣavidhaḥ* is the recurring phrase. This implies that there is no human realm, however spiritual it may be, which is not structured after the human body or the archetypal body of the *puruṣa*. Even when *puruṣa* is the inner Spirit, he is not completely formless (cf. BrUp II.3, *mūrta* and *amūrta*): he has the size of a thumb, *aṅguṣṭhamātra*:

अङ्गुष्ठमात्रः पुरुषो ज्योतिरिवाधूमकः ।

ईशानो भूतभव्यस्य स एवाद्य स उ श्वः ॥

KaṭhUp IV.13

A person of the measure of a thumb,

Like a light without smoke,

Lord of what has been and what is to be.

He alone is today, and tomorrow too. (Tr. R.E. Hume)

Even the mystical experience can be visualized as different light-forms of the *puruṣa*, which are connected with colours as refractions of the pure white light:

तस्य हैतस्य पुरुषस्य रूपम् । यथा माहारजनं वासो यथा पाण्ड्वाविकं यथेन्द्रगोपो
यथाऽग्न्यर्चिर्यथा पुण्डरीकं यथा सकृद्विद्युत्तम् ।

BrUp II.3.6

The form of this Person is like a saffron-coloured robe, like white wool, like the (red) Indragopa beetle, like a flame of fire, like the (white) louts-flower, like a sudden flash of lightning.

(Tr. R.E. Hume)

The comparison with a flame also relates to the verticality of the *puruṣa* who is compared to the axis (*skambha*), to the tree (cf. MNUp 226; BrUp III.9.28) and to fire (Agni). The micro-macrocosmic relations characterize the *puruṣa* over against the more abstract concepts of *ātman* and *brahman*: the *puruṣa* ('spirit') in the eye corresponds to the *puruṣa* in the sun (cf. ChUp I.6-7; IV.11-15, etc.). It is the recognition of their identity which leads to integration.

The **Aitareya Upaniṣad** uses the *Puruṣasūkta* in describing the creation of Man. He is formed out of the waters (I.1.3). When he is complete with all his

sense-organs, he is said to be 'well-done' (*sukṛta*): *puruṣo vāva sukṛtam*, "Verily, a person is a thing well done" (AitUp I.2.3, tr. R.E. Hume).

The Chāndogya Upaniṣad contains an early anthropogony:

Connecting the layers of meaning of the Original Being, the inner Spirit, Man and the Supreme Person, the Upaniṣads exalt *Puruṣa* as the Lord of all.

वेदाहमेतं पुरुषं महान्तमादित्यवर्णं तमसः परस्तात् ।
 तमेव विदित्वाऽति मृत्युमेति नान्यः पन्था विद्यतेऽयनाय ॥
 यस्मात् परं नापरमस्ति किञ्चिद्यस्मान्नाणीयो न ज्यायोऽस्ति किञ्चित् ।
 वृक्ष इव स्तब्धो दिवि तिष्ठत्येकस्तेनेदं पूर्णं पुरुषेण सर्वम् ॥
 ŚvUp III.8-9

I have come to know that mighty Person,
 golden like the sun, beyond all darkness.
 By knowing him a man transcends death;
 there is no other path for reaching that goal.
 Higher than him is nothing whatever;
 than him nothing smaller, than him nothing greater.
 He stands like a tree rooted in heaven,
 the One, the Person, filling this whole world. (Tr. R. Panikkar)

This concept is so all-embracing, because it is the container and the contained at the same time, cosmic manifestation and inner Self, Original Being and created Man.

The layers of meaning in the Upaniṣads are like concentric circles, in which the centre, the '*puruṣa*, the light in the heart,' has the same degree of reality as the periphery, the cosmic manifestation, though undoubtedly it is the centre which gives life to the outer circles. This is somehow symbolically expressed in the conception of the three *puruṣas* in the Jaiminiya Upaniṣad Brāhmaṇa (I.27). The *puruṣa* is the one present in the eye, and he is to be meditated upon as *anurūpa*, 'because he follows all forms'. The *atipuruṣa* ('transcendent *puruṣa*') is present in the sun, and is to be meditated upon as *pratirūpa*, 'because he faces all forms. The *paramapuruṣa* ('Supreme Person') is experienced in lightning, and is to be meditated upon as *sarvarūpa*, 'because he contains all forms'. These categories correspond to the microcosmic, the macrocosmic, and the transcendent.

Puruṣa being the totality, he is conceived of as having sixteen parts, just as the moon has sixteen digits: *ṣoḍaśakala puruṣa* (cf. ChUp VI.7.1; PrUp IV.4). The same conception is found in Āyurveda where it applies to the human body: *puruṣaḥ ṣoḍaśakalah*, '*puruṣa* or the human body has sixteen substrata' (SuSam Uttaratantra LXVI.7). His 'colour' is always connected with light, whether it be

golden or white: *hiraṇmayah puruṣa ekahaṃsaḥ* 'the golden Person, the one Spirit' (→ *haṃsa*) (BrUp IV.3.11-12).

The micro-macrocosmic relationships lead ultimately to the identification of the human with the divine *puruṣa*, as in the **Chāndogya Upaniṣad**:

एवमेवैष संप्रसादोऽस्माच्छरीरात् समुत्थाय परं ज्योतिरुपसंपद्य स्वेन रूपेणाभिनिष्पद्यते।
स उत्तमपुरुषः ।

ChUp VIII.12.3

Even so that serene one (*samprasāda*), when he rises up from this body (*śarīra*) and reaches the highest light, appears in his own form. Such a one is the supreme person (*uttama puruṣa*). (Tr. R.E. Hume)

and in the famous prayer of the dying man in the **Īśa Upaniṣad**:

यत्ते रूपं कल्याणतमं तत्ते पश्यामि योऽसावसौ पुरुषः सोऽहमस्मि ॥

ĪśUp 16cd

What is thy fairest form – that of thee I see. He who is yonder, yonder Person (*puruṣa*) – I myself am he! (Tr. R.E. Hume)

Even in this context of a mystical experience, the form, *rūpa* and *svarūpa*, of the *puruṣa* is not absent, as he was associated with form since the beginning:

तस्य त्वष्टा विदधद् रूपमेति ।
तत् पुरुषस्य विश्वम् आजानमग्रे ॥

TĀr III.13.1

Tvaṣṭā (the 'creator') has bestowed form on him, this is the universal birth of *puruṣa*.

The multiple meanings of *puruṣa* in the Upaniṣads are basic to the Indian tradition, as can be seen from the occurrence of the same symbols in Tantric texts which have no direct link with the Veda. For example:

हिरण्मयं दीपमनेकवर्णं त्रिमूर्तिमूलं निगमादिबीजम् ।
अङ्गुष्ठमात्रं पुरुषं भजन्ते चैतन्यमात्रं रविमण्डलस्थम् ॥

ŚāTil XXV.59

The worshippers are devoted to *Puruṣa* who measures the size of a thumb. He is pure consciousness and is staying in the disk of the Sun. He is golden, multicoloured light, the very source of three forms (Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Rudra) and the first cause of the Vedas. (Tr. H.N. Chakravarty)

The identification of *puruṣa* with Nārāyaṇa-Viṣṇu, the Supreme Person or

God, called *puruṣottama* in the **Bhagavad-Gītā**, is central to Vaiṣṇava theology. It goes back to the Upaniṣads:

विश्वतः परमं नित्यं विश्वत्रारायणं हरिम् ।

विश्वमेवेदं पुरुषस्तद् विश्वमुपजीवति ॥

MNUp XI.2

(The God with a thousand heads)
He is everywhere supreme, eternal,
the universal Nārāyaṇa, Hari,
Puruṣa is verily this All,
in whom this universe lives.

Obviously the concept of *puruṣottama* is related with the totality:

यो मामेवमसम्मूढो जानाति पुरुषोत्तमम् ।

स सर्वविद् भजति मां सर्वभावेन भारत ॥

BhG XV.19

Whoever thus knows Me, unconfused, as the Person (All-) Sublime knows all and (knowing all) communes with Me with all his being, all his love. (Tr. R.C. Zaehner)

The ideal man, so to say, participates in the nature of the *puruṣa-puruṣottama*:

यं हि न व्यथयन्त्येते पुरुषं पुरुषर्षभ ।

समदुःखसुखं धीरं सोऽमृतत्वाय कल्पते ॥

BhG II.15

(O Arjuna), for wise men there are, the same in pleasure as in pain, whom these (contacts) leave undaunted: such are conformed to immortality (cf. also BhG II.19). (Tr. R.C. Zaehner)

Vaiṣṇava theology praises Kṛṣṇa or Govinda as *ādipuruṣa* or *puruṣottama* (cf. UjNīl III.53). In the **Rāmāyaṇa** too, *puruṣa* and *puruṣottama* are applied to Viṣṇu or Rāma (cf. Rām VI.117.15).

प्राणायामेन पुरुषं ध्यायमाना जनार्दनम् ॥

Rām II.4.33cd

Meditating on the (triune) Person, Janārdana, through suspension of breath. (Tr. C.R. Swaminathan)

The **Mahābhārata** starts with a homage to the supreme, original man, *narottama* (MBh I.1.1) and *ādyā puruṣa*, playing with the word *puruṣa* by calling him *puruḥhutaṃ puruṣtutam*, 'he who is worshipped by many, praised by many'

(MBh I.1.20–21). We find other explanations of the term *puruṣa*, in continuity with the Vedic-Upanisadic hermeneutics:

नवद्वारं पुरं पुण्यमेतैर्भावैः समन्वितम् ।

व्याप्य शेते महानात्मा तस्मात् पुरुष उच्यते ॥

MBh XII.203.35

Since the great Self pervades and resides in this holy city (the body) with nine gates, possessed of these organs, he is called *puruṣa*.

The Udyogaparvan (68.10) summarizes the established meanings: “He is named the supreme Spirit since he pervades and resides (in everything)” (*pūraṇāt sadanāccaiva tato'sau puruṣottamaḥ*, quoted in ViSahasrBh XIV.406, tr. R.A. Sastry).

In Buddhism, the *puruṣa* as the ideal Man has been identified with the Buddha who has been called *mahāpuruṣa*. He incorporates the ideal of perfection in both its physical and spiritual aspects, which have been classified as the *mahāpuruṣalakṣaṇas* (mostly 32), the characteristics of the ‘great Person’ (cf. LVi Janma-Parivarta VII, p. 74). These → *lakṣaṇas* have influenced the representation of the Bodhisattva or Buddha in the whole of Buddhist art, even outside India. The *mahāpuruṣalakṣaṇas*, however, are not confined to the Buddha, for they are also applied to the representation of other great men, kings or gods (cf. VDhPur III.37.4, etc.).

As P. Mus has shown in the case of the Stūpa, there is another kind of continuity between the R̥gvedic *puruṣa* and the Buddha, whose relics are preserved in the Stūpa. “The Buddha is identified with these relics and with the Stūpa just as in the Agnicayana the *yajamāna* is identified with the golden man and with the altar itself” (F. Staal, *Agni*, Vol. I, p. 120).

The concept of *puruṣa* in Āyurveda is influenced by Sāṃkhya (cf. SuSam ŚāSthā I.9; III.4), but there is no separation from *prakṛti*, rather *puruṣa* is the sum total of the objects, sense-organs, and mental faculties (cf. CarSam ŚāSthā I.35).

अस्मिञ्छास्त्रे पञ्चमहाभूतशरीरिसमवायः पुरुष इत्युच्यते ।

SuSamSūSthā I.22

In the present science (Āyurveda) the *puruṣa* (self-conscious organic individual) is described as the resultant of the combination of the soul and the five primary material principles. (Tr. K.L. Bhishagrajna)

Puruṣa is thus both the combination of the five elements with consciousness, as well as consciousness alone (*khādayaścetanāśaṣṭhā dhātavaḥ puruṣaḥ smṛtaḥ, cetanādhāturapyekāḥ smṛtaḥ puruṣasaṃjñakāḥ*, CarSam ŚāSthā I.16). A similar conception is expressed in the **Siddhāntaleśa-Saṅgraha**:

पञ्चीकृतभूतकार्यसमष्टिस्थूलशरीरोपहितो विराट् पुरुष इति ।

SiddhSaṅg p.97

Puruṣa is the supreme, all-pervasive Being confined to the gross physical body which is the combination of the proceeds of all the five elements properly combined. (Tr. C.R. Swaminathan)

A whole anthropology is implied here, taking into account all the dimensions of the human being.

The Darśanas have made an abstraction of the earlier mytho-symbolical understanding of *puruṣa*. The Sāṃkhya concept of *puruṣa* is quite distinct from the Vedic because it is the counterpart of → *prakṛti* primal Nature or materiality. Spirit is now separated from matter, and so the characteristics of *puruṣa* in the **Sāṃkhya-Kārikā** are: pure consciousness (*cetana*, SāṃKā 55), he is a pure witness (*sākṣitva*), isolated (*kaivalya*), neutral (*madhyastha*), a seer (*draṣṭṛtva*) and nor an agent (*akartṛbhāva*, SāṃKā 19). Some of his attributes are that he is causeless (*ahetumat*), eternal (*nitya*), all-pervading (*vyāpin*), inactive (*akriya*), without support (*anāśrita*), and not an object (*aviśaya*) (SāṃKā 10–11). All the creative activity is transferred to *prakṛti*, and *puruṣa* remains the passive witness (*kṣetrajña*, 'knower of the field'). The Sāṃkhya system accepts a plurality of *puruṣas*, souls or centres of consciousness, as many as there are living beings. The Sāṃkhya teacher Vijñānabhikṣu, tried to reconcile the plurality of *puruṣas* with the Vedantic concept of the one Self (→ *ātman*).

Liberation for Sāṃkhya consists in the total isolation of the *puruṣa* or pure spirit from its involvement with *prakṛti*. This conception is also common to the Yoga system of Patañjali, although the methods of reaching the purity of the *puruṣa* are different.

Patañjali defines the Lord, *Īśvara*, as 'a particular *puruṣa* unaffected by affliction, action, its result, and its latent impressions' (*kleśa-kārma-viṣāṇāśayair aparāṃrṣṭaḥ puruṣa-viśeṣa īśvaraḥ*, YSū I.24). In the case of *yogī*, his freedom consists in harmonizing the purity of his inner nature and of the *puruṣa* (*sattva-puruṣayoḥ śuddhi-sāmye kaivalyam*, YSū III.55). The *puruṣa* has to free himself from whatever is wrongly associated with it (cf. YSū IV.34).

Vedānta criticizes the Sāṃkhya view of the plurality of *puruṣa*. Śāṅkara maintains the identity of the (Upanisadic) *puruṣa* with the immutable, ever pure, and free *brahman*, which is none other than the one *ātman* or Self (cf. BrSūŚBh I.1.4).

Although Sāṃkhya concepts have permeated almost all schools and texts, the dualistic understanding of the *puruṣa-prakṛti* pair has been transformed in the various systems, or the Sāṃkhyan *puruṣa* has simply become one of the principles of reality (→ *tattva*), not the highest one.

In the **Viṣṇu Purāṇa**, *puruṣa* or *pumān* (stem – *pums*) has the characteristics of the Samkhyan concept (ViPur II.7.28cd–29ab), but also of the Upanisadic *brahman* (*pumān sarvagato vyāpī ākāśavad ayaṃ yataḥ*, “the *puruṣa* is omnipresent and all-pervading, like the sky”). *Puruṣa* is said to be the first form of the supreme *brahman* (*parasya brahmaṇo rūpaṃ puruṣaḥ prathamam dviḥ*, ViPur I.2.15). He is not identical with a specific body:

पुमान् न देवो न नरो न पशुर्न च पादपः ।
शरीराकृतिभेदास्तु भूपैते कर्मयोनयः ॥

ViPur II.13.98

An embodied Self is (in reality) neither a god, nor a man, nor a beast, nor a tree, these are the various forms of the body and are the sources of actions. (Tr. R. S. Bhattacharya)

A combination of the Vedic-Upanisadic symbolism and the Samkhyan concept, not in its dualistic interpretation, becomes common in the Tantras and Āgamas, e.g.:

पुरं प्रधानमित्युक्तं प्रपञ्चानेकसंकुलम् ।
तत्पुरं पोषयेद् यस्मात्तस्माद्वै पुरुषः स्मृतः ॥

SvT XI.101

Pura (abode) is said to be *pradhāna* (= *prakṛti*) which is possessed of multifarious manifestations. As it (the light of the self) nourishes (*puṣ*) this form of *pura*, it is called *puruṣa*. (Tr. H.N. Chakravarty)

Kṣemarāja explains in his commentary that *puruṣa* bestows consciousness on all the faculties. Cf. also:

अतः परंतु पुरुषः पद्ममध्ये व्यवस्थितः ।
चित्स्वरूपश्च सर्वेषु देहमापूर्य संस्थितः ॥

SvT XII.105

Then one should meditate on *puruṣa* as established in the centre of the heart lotus. It is consciousness by nature. It remains in every living being permeating the entire body. (Tr. H.N. Chakravarty)

Again, Kṣemarāja adds that though the whole body is the abode of *puruṣa*, yet his excellent abode is the heart-lotus (cf. also, NT XIX.139–140). In the Śaiva Āgamas and Tantras *puruṣa* often refers to the principle (*tattva*) (e.g. MṛgĀ vp X.18; XIII.150, MPĀ vp XIV.2, etc.).

भुङ्क्ते प्रधानमाश्रित्य परिपाकमुपागतान् ॥
स भोक्ता पुरुषः प्रोक्तः कारणेच्छानुवर्तकः ।

MPĀ vp V.44cd–45ab

Puruṣa, the soul having taken its support in *pradhāna* enjoys the objects which have ripened. The enjoyer is named *puruṣa* and he is solely guided by the will of the original cause (*kāraṇecchā*).
(Tr. H. N. Chakravarty)

The more specific sense of *puruṣa* in Śaiva theology is, however, Śiva's aspect as Tatpuruṣa, one of the five faces or five *brahmans*:

तस्य तस्य तनुर्या पूस्तस्यामुषति येन सः ॥
तत् त्राणाद्व्यञ्जनाच्चापि स तत्पुरुषवक्त्रकः ।

MṛgĀ vp III.10cd-11ab

Since he dwells in the city (*pur*) which is the body of everyone, and because of his action of salvation and manifestation, he (Śiva) has Tatpuruṣa as his face.

The Aghoraśivācārya Paddhati describes the meditation on Tatpuruṣa:

पञ्चवक्त्रेभ्यो वक्त्रमादाय “ ‘ओं हें तत्पुरुषवक्त्राय नमः इति पूर्वदले’ पीताम्बरोपवीतञ्च नरं कनकसन्निभम् । मातुलुङ्गाक्षसूत्रे च दधानं चन्द्रमौलिनम् ” इति ध्यात्वा जपेत् । (p. 107)

तत्पुरुषः वक्त्रमिव यस्य सोऽयं तत्पुरुषवक्त्रः तस्मै । तस्य तस्य अमरादेः या पूःपुरी तनूः तस्यां पुरि यजमानस्वरूपतया अधिष्ठातृभावेन उषितः तत्पुरुषः ।

Comm. p. 110

Taking the face (the eastern face) from among the five faces and uttering ‘*Om heṃ tatpuruṣa vaktrāya namaḥ*’ one should meditate on the Lord as on the eastern petal thus, “The Lord, the person, wearing yellow (golden) cloth and sacred thread and shining like gold and holding a pomegranate fruit and a rosary of *rudrākṣa* beads and having the moon on His crest”, and worship Him.

Tatpuruṣa vaktra is He to whom Tatpuruṣa is like a face. To Him (obeisance). *Pūḥ*, i.e. *purī* is the body of the various (beings), gods, etc. Tatpuruṣa is He who dwells in that body as ‘the master, the presiding person.’ (Tr. S.S. Janaki)

Tatpuruṣa is the face of Śiva facing the East, his name is again explained as: *tat* (i.e. beings) + *pur* (i.e. bodies) + *uṣita* (dwell, from the root *vas-*). His identification with the *yajamāna* is again reminiscent of the Vedic context.

Interestingly, the nature or aspect of this Tatpuruṣa is described as stillness (*staimityam*, immobility, cf. MṛgĀ kp III.43-44). Or *puruṣa* is also used for the supreme Being or Śiva, e.g.:

एकः सन्नेव पुरुषो बहुधा जायते हि सः ।

YoH II.45ab

Though Puruṣa is one, yet He becomes many. (Tr. H.N. Chakravarty)

Amṛtānanda comments on this: *puruṣa puruṣasya vācako viśvasya pūraṇāt paramaśivaḥ puruṣaḥ*, "Puruṣa is so called because he fills the universe, (thus) *puruṣa* is the supreme Śiva." He is both embodied and bodiless (NT XIX.139-140).

Another implication of the *puruṣa* is contained in its derivation *puruṣa*, human effort, exertion, heroism, manlihood and so on. In the **Mahābhārata** *puruṣa* or *puruṣakāra* is the counterpart of *daiva*, destiny, both being the main factors in the course of the world:

दैवे पुरुषकारे च लोकोऽयं हि प्रतिष्ठितः ।

MBh I.114.16ab

The world depends on destiny and (human) exertion. (Tr. P.C. Roy)

Manifestation in the Arts

All the above-mentioned dimensions of *puruṣa* find their manifestation and expression in the arts. This concept has given both content and structure to the different art-forms. Art-theory or aesthetics cannot exist without a proper anthropology, which in Indian terms means *puruṣavidyā*. *Puruṣa* is man and more than man, he embraces the cosmic, the human and the divine.

The most direct manifestation is found in architecture and sculpture. In architecture (*Vāstuśāstra*) the conception of the *vāstupuruṣa* plays an important role, mainly in relation to the site of a building (*vāstu*), but also to the elevation of a temple. It is derived from a myth in which *puruṣa* is a powerful being or 'demon'.

पुराभूत्पुरुषः कश्चिद्ध्वनत्रयभीषणः ॥

भुवनानि शरीरेणच्छादयन्भीमविक्रमः ।

तं दृष्ट्वा सर्वदेवाश्च भीता ह्यासन् परस्परम् ॥

संप्रधार्य तु संभूय गृहीत्वा तमधोमुखम् ।

अवष्टभ्य भुवः पृष्ठे सहसैव न्यपातयन् ॥

स एव वास्तुरित्युक्तः ।

AjitĀ kp VIII.1cd-4a

In ancient times a terrible *puruṣa* was born. He was dreadful to the

three worlds (earth, nether world and heaven). The terrible one who was fierce in his prowess covered the three worlds with his body. Seeing him all the gods were frightened. Then discussing the matter mutually and taking hold of him collectively, they pressed him downfaced and then threw him all at once on the surface of the earth. He is called *vāstupuruṣa*. (Tr. H.N. Chakravarty)

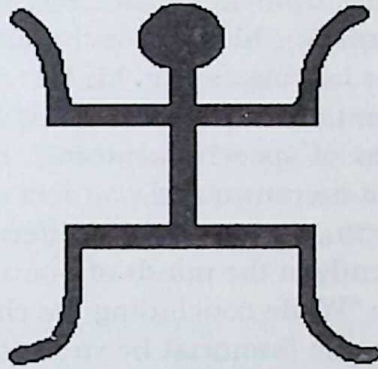
The *Bṛhat Saṃhitā* (LIII.2-3) recounts this story by adding that whichever limbs were held down by different gods, had those very gods as their presiding deities. The creator ordained this Being as the house-god. This accounts for the fact that the *vāstupuruṣamaṇḍala* which is drawn on the site of a building with 64 or 81 subdivisions (squares) assigns different deities to the different parts of the *puruṣa*'s body (cf. *BṛSam* LIII.42-56). The conception of the body is so vivid that a relationship is established between the wholeness of the limbs of the *vāstupuruṣa* and the health and happiness of the dwellers in the house (cf. *avikalapuruṣe vasatām mānārthayutāni saukhyāni*, *BṛSam* LIII.63). This wholeness also implies, e.g. that the vital points (→ *mantra*) of the *puruṣa* are not to be hurt in the construction of the house or temple. The conception of the *vāstupuruṣa* implies again an integration of the cosmic (the consecration of the earth), the divine (the various divinities assigned to parts of his body) and the human.

But the *puruṣa* is not only related to site and ground plan. The elevation of a temple (*śikhara* above the *garbhagṛha* or sanctum) is also likened to the body of *puruṣa*, and the different parts of the temple are named after the limbs of the body (→ *prāsāda*) the soul being the consecrated image in the sanctum (*ŚiRaKo* 6-14). The temple is thus a symbol of the cosmic Man which is all in one body and soul, parts and the whole (cf. *Śilparatnakośa*, *Agni Purāṇa*). Stella Kramrisch writes about *vāstupuruṣa* in its relation to the temple that it is "an image of ordered manifestation. Vāstu now is its name. Its image is that of the *Puruṣa*, the place of reference in which *mān* beholds the identity of macrocosm and microcosm. On its appeased being and form spread on the ground he sets up the temple, the monument of its own transformation ... This body once more, in the concrete form (*mūrti*), made by art, is that of the *Puruṣa*, arisen" (Stella Kramrisch, *The Hindu Temple*, Vol. I, p. 34).

Apart from the Vedic archetype, even the Sāṃkhya concepts of *puruṣa-prakṛti* in their theistic meaning have found expression in the context of the temple. The sanctum, *garbhagṛha* or *vimāna*, has often been termed *prakṛti*. The *sandhisthāna* or junction between the two is so to say a place of union (→ *sandhi*), for the temple symbolically represents, and makes possible specially the meeting or union between the Deity (*puruṣa*) and human nature (*prakṛti*), which symbolically corresponds to the male-female relationship.

In sculpture, the *puruṣa* is the obvious archetype of the anthropomorphic

image. Its origin is probably to be found in the golden figure of the *puruṣa* which was built into the Vedic fire-altar, much before any anthropomorphic images of gods were known. This has been related to the *stūpa* containing the relics of the Buddha. "The casting of images of the Buddha, and indeed the origin of idol worship itself, may originate in this context" (F. Staal, *Agni*, Vol. I, p. 120). The simple, stylized shape of the *puruṣa* drawn even now on earthen pots (→ *kalaśa*) used in *pūjā* with the paste of rice-powder, is a direct continuation of the Vedic form. It comes close to the shape of a → *svastika*.



Some Śilpaśāstras derive the anthropomorphic form from the → *yūpa* with which it shares its verticality and the round head (not by chance is the standing image of Nārāyaṇa-Viṣṇu more directly connected with *puruṣa* than deities in other poses).

यथा अङ्गुष्ठमात्रपुरुषस्य भावः प्रभवति विकल्पेन अङ्गुष्ठमिति ज्योतिर्मात्रम् । स यूपस्य दण्ड इव ।

तद्भावाद्वृषं रूपं प्रतिरूपं जायते । यथा पुरुषे ।

Comm. on VSUp IV.1-2

As the nature (*bhāva*) of the *Puruṣa* is conceived of the size of a thumb, and in imagination the thumb means only light, so it is like the post of the *Yūpa*.

The images corresponding to every (original) form arise on the basis of that nature (*bhāva*), as in the case of the *Puruṣa*.

(Tr. A. Boner and B. Bäumer)

And the text goes on to say that the sculptors fashion images in stone for worship (IV.3), as a direct consequence of the *puruṣa*-symbol. The relation of *puruṣa* and of the image with measure – whether macro- or microdimensional – is primarily symbolical (e.g. *daśāṅgula*, *aṅguṣṭha-mātra*), but it has its concrete

application in a system of proportions related to the human body (→ *tāla*).

As second part of a compound, *puruṣa* refers to the personification or anthropomorphic figure representing some abstract emblem in iconography: *āyudhapuruṣa* is the personified emblem, such as *cakrapuruṣa* who is represented at the side of a Viṣṇu image, holding a *cakra* or discus.

Indian poetics (*Kāvyaśāstra*) speaks of a *kāvya-puruṣa*, and 'incarnation' of the art of poetry, a concept which Rājaśekhara has elaborated in his *Kāvya-Mīmāṃsā* in the form of an allegory (Kavirahasya 3, entitled *Kāvya-puruṣotpatti*). The *kāvya-puruṣa* or 'incarnation of poetry' is the son of Sarasvatī, the goddess of speech and learning, born from her *tapas*. His body consists of word and meaning (*śabdārthau te śarīram*), his head is the Sanskrit language and other limbs correspond to other languages (e.g. his feet are the Paisāca dialect), his soul is *rasa*, the poetic sentiment (*rasa ātmā*) his hair is the metres and his ornaments are the figures of speech (*alaṅkāra*), etc. he is then married to *sāhityavidyā*, the science of literature and wanders with her throughout India, creating different styles (*vṛttis*, *rītis*, etc.) in the different parts. Finally the couple resolve to reside permanently in the minds of poets. Even here the idea of the spiritual *puruṣa* is present: "While concluding the chapter, the Author declares that those poets who become immortal by virtue of their composition enjoy eternal bliss in heaven in a divine form; and those who can realise the *Kāvya-puruṣa*, obtain emancipation both here and hereafter' (C.D. Dalal and R.A. Sastry, *Kāvya Mīmāṃsā* of Rājaśekhara, Baroda, 1934, p. xix, Introduction).

In music or *Saṅgītaśāstra* *prabandha* or musical composition has been conceptualized in the form of *prabandha-puruṣa*, i.e. a structure on the analogy of the human being.

... अङ्गानि षट् तस्य स्वरश्च बिरुदं पदम् ।

तेनकः पाटतालौ च प्रबन्धपुरुषस्य ते ॥

भवन्त्यङ्गवदङ्गानि ... ।

SR IV.12-13a

There are six *aṅgas* (limbs) of the *prabandha-puruṣa*: *svara* (solfa syllables), *biruda* (eulogic epithets), *pada* (meaningful word in general), *tenaka* ('*tena*' standing for the ultimate Reality), *pāṭa* (drum-syllables) and *tāla* (cyclic time-figure). These are *aṅgas* (limbs) like the limbs (of the human body). (Tr. P.L. Sharma)

In other words, the total musical form is a living organism consisting of six limbs, which are in harmonious co-operation just as are the limbs of the human body.

But *puruṣa* also refers to the masculine nature as distinguished from the

feminine as in the *Nāṭya-Śāstra*, e.g. *striyo hi strīgato bhāvaḥ, pauruṣaḥ puruṣasya ca* (NŚ XXVI.13). The *Nāṭya-Śāstra* describes the eight masculine qualities (*sattvabhedas tu pauruṣaḥ*, NŚ XXII.33). In drama, men can enact women's roles and also vice versa, adopting the respective qualities (e.g. NŚ XXVI.15). The *Saṅgīta-Ratnākara* prescribes six *sthānas* (static postures) for men and seven for women (SR VII.1019–1020, 1029).

Process

Since the beginning, *puruṣa* has been related to cosmogony and his association with the arts remains linked with the original creative process. The Vedic seers realized that every process of creation had to go through a phase of disintegration or sacrifice. Thus explicitly or implicitly, the process of sacrifice – dismembering and reconstruction – remains basic to the idea of *puruṣa*. This process also implies an entering of the Divine into the world, a descent into immanence, as well as an ascent of the human to the Divine. It is a process of total transformation.

The other process involved is creativity out of the polar relationship of the sexes – where the masculine gender of *puruṣa* comes to the foreground. In the *Puruṣasūkta* it was the mutual begetting of *puruṣa* and *virāj*, in *Sāṃkhya* the dual principle of *puruṣa-prakṛti*, in *Śaiva* theology the relationship of *Śiva-Śakti*. Manu expresses this creative process thus:

द्विधा कृत्वात्मनो देहमर्धेन पुरुषोऽभवत् ।
अर्धेन नारी तस्यां स विराजमसृजत्प्रभुः ॥
तपस्तप्त्वाऽसृजद्यं तु स स्वयं पुरुषो विराट् ।
तं मां वित्तास्य सर्वस्य स्रष्टारं द्विजसत्तमाः ॥

Manu I.32–33

Dividing his own body, the Lord became half male and half female; with that (female) he produced Virāj. But know me, O most holy one among the twice-born, to be the creator of this whole (world), whom that Puruṣa, Virāj, himself produced, having performed austerities. (Based on the tr. by G. Bühler)

In the aspect of cosmogony *tapas*, 'inner heat', takes the place of sacrifice. Thus, out of the duality male-female and by means of *tapas* the multiplicity of beings is created (Manu I.34ff.).

In the process of the construction of a temple, the *puruṣa* in the demonic form of the *vāstupuruṣa* is first divided up and subdued in the foundations and then raised in the superstructure as the divine Body.

Conclusion

The *puruṣa* has served as an all-embracing symbol in the arts, establishing a link with Vedic cosmogony and the divine-human body. The individual manifestations of the arts are only meaningful in relation to such a conception of the organic totality of a form or structure. The concept of *puruṣa* is not to be equated with the European Renaissance, 'Man the measure of all things', but rather with the idea that Man – body and soul – is himself an integral part of a greater organism. In the Indian conception there is no conflict between Man and nature, and hence the *puruṣa* remains a symbol of integration.

Bettina Bäumer

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ĀTMAN

Overview

Ātman (m.) is one of the most central words of Indian philosophy and culture and bears several layers of meaning. Its primary meaning is the essence or real nature of everything, the principle of unity underlying all diversity, the undifferentiated principle behind all differentiation, the imperishable behind the perishables, the all-pervading, the formless behind all forms, the intangible behind all tangibles; but at the secondary level it bears numerous identifications, e.g. it is identified with body, mind, intellect, vital force, etc. There is difference of opinion regarding its being the doer (*kartr*), and enjoyer (*bhoktr*), but its being knower (*jñātr* or of the essence of *jñāna* itself) is almost universally accepted. Some systems of philosophy accept it as being unaffected by any quality or action (*guṇa* or *karman*), i.e. *nirguṇa*, and others accept this affection and maintain it to be *saguṇa*; this difference of approach is also obvious in the acceptance of its plurality or singularity. But in spite of these differences of opinion, the subtle and intangible nature of *ātman*, the equation of the goal of human life with the realisation of the *ātman* is almost universal. When the Buddhist says that negation of *ātman* is the means to liberation, the purport is that all empirical identifications have to be got rid of. Some accept it as being its own regulator and some accept, a Supreme *ātman* as regulator of the individual *ātman*.

The most common usage of this word both in the written and oral traditions is in the sense of one's own self, whatever be the level of identification, as distinct from the 'other', i.e. self-identity.

Compounds like *jīvātman*, *paramātman*, *sarvātman* and *ātmarati*, *ātma-bodha*, etc. are innumerable, with *ātman* forming the second or first component.

In the arts, sometimes the reference to *śarīra* suggests the concept of *ātman* and at other times it is *vice-versa*, i.e. indirectly or directly the concept of a principle that permeates the 'whole' and keeps the parts together like the thread stringing the beads (*sūtrātman*). The realisation of this principle in the form of *rasa* is the goal both at the level of creativity and receptivity.

Etymology and Related Words

Yāska, commenting on *ātmā yakṣmasya naśyati* (RV X.97.11), has given the etymology as follows:

आत्माऽततेर्वा आसेर्वा । अपि वास इव स्यात् । यावद् व्याप्तिभूत इति ।

The word *ātman* is derived from the root *at-* meaning constant motion or the root *āp-* standing for permeation. Thus permeation is accepted as the very nature of *ātman*.

Yāska (Nir VII.4) has also given the name *ātman* to one *mahādevatā* and has mentioned other *devatās* as the *aṅgas* of the same. Elsewhere he says:

एभ्यः पर आत्मा । तान्यस्मिन्नेकं भवन्ति ।

Nir X.26

Ātman is beyond the *indriyas* (sensory and motor organs); the latter become unified in the former.

Thus Yāska has accepted three meanings of *ātman*, viz. (1) the permeating or pervading principle, (2) the organism (*aṅgin*) in which other elements are combined or unified as *aṅgas* (components or organs, and (3) the ultimate sentient principle (*cetanatattva*) in which subsidiary *cetana tattvas* combine (*saṅghāta*). Apte's Sanskrit-English Dictionary gives the derivation of *ātman* from the root *an-*, meaning the action of *prāṇa* (life-principle). Accordingly:

अनिति प्राणान् धारयतीत्यात्मा ।

The principle that holds *prāṇa* is *ātman*.

According to this etymology, the body and sentient principle could be known as *ātman*. The derivation from the roots *at-* and *an-* is doubted by modern linguists, but the meaning of 'breath' is attested by Indo-European cognates such as *Atem* (German). Besides its use as a noun, denoting the inner essence or soul, *ātman* is also used as a reflexive pronoun: oneself.

The Prakrit form of *ātman* is *attā*, which is used in Pali. *Appā* is the Prakrit form of *ātman* in the sense of *vyāpti* (permeation); it is not used in Pali, whereas in Jaina Āgamas both *attā* and *appā* are used. (Cf. AdhSū I.15–16, ascribed to 3rd century B.C. for *appā* and XIII.10 ascribed to 1st century B.C. for *attā*, variant reading *attā*, or *ātā*, the latter being more ancient.) In ancient Tamil literature also (7th century A.D.) both *attā* and *appā* are used for father or Śiva, the universal father.

Śrī Śaṅkarācārya has compiled four derivations in a citation in his commentary on the *Kātha Upaniṣad*:

यच्चाप्नोति यदादत्ते यच्चात्ति विषयानिह । यच्चास्य सन्ततो भावस्तस्मादात्मेति कीर्त्यते ॥

KāthUp ŚBh IV.1

Ātman is known as such because of obtaining objects of perception, accepting or taking, enjoyment and eternal existence.

The first derivation is from the root *an-*; the second from the root *dā-* with the

prefix *ā* and the third from the root *ad-* meaning eating.

The traditional derivation from the root *at-* has been given other dimensions of meaning by later thinkers.

देहेन्द्रियादिकं सर्वं परार्थमतति व्याप्नोति अधितिष्ठति इत्यात्मा ।

PrR p. 173

Ātman is known as such because of being the basis, *adhiṣṭhāna* (seat) of body, senses, etc.

अत्यते लभ्यते मुक्तैरित्यात्मा ।

PraRat I.7

Ātman (the Supreme Lord) is attainable by liberated beings.

Here *ātman* does not stand for individuated beings, *jīva*, but primarily for *paramātman*. In the *Śaiva Paribhāṣā* the root *at-* has been taken to mean knowing in addition to constant motion and permeation (*ata sātatyagamane vyutpannā ātmāno vyāpinaḥ* – p.44). Similarly:

तत्तत्कर्मनुसारेण नानायोनीरनुव्रजन् । अततीत्यत एवात्मा ।

ŚSūVā III.4

According to the respective deed the *ātman* moves in various *yonis* (lit. wombs, the form of existence fixed by birth).

In spite of all the subtle differences mentioned above, by and large, the implications of the etymology from the root *at-* (constant motion) indicate the all-pervasive or all-permeating nature of *ātman*.

The *Amara Kośa* (I.4.29a) gives two synonyms of *ātman*, viz. *kṣetrajña* and *puruṣa*. Apart from these two, the cognate or related terms of *ātman* could be grouped as follows:

(i) Compounds representing:

- (a) the element that is permeated by *ātman*, like *bhūtātman*, *antarātman*, *sakalātman*, etc.;
- (b) the Supreme or Ultimate Reality, *paramātman* as distinct from *jīvātman*, the individuated soul;
- (c) *sūtrātman*, the soul which passes like a thread through the universe (Monier-Williams);
- (d) relationship with (limited) self like *ātmaja* (son or progeny, born of self), *ātma-yoni* (self-born), *ātmastha* (established in 'self') as distinct from *parastha* (seated in the 'other').

(ii) Compounds like *ātmavān* or *ātmanvin* meaning 'self-composed', 'self-possessed' and its antonym *anātmavān*; *kṛtātman*, meaning 'self-controlled' and its antonym *akṛtātman*; *mahātman*, the great soul, *jītātman*, one who has conquered *ātman*, *ātmahan* (lit. killer of the self) used figuratively for one who forfeits the purpose of life, etc. used as adjectives of human beings, denoting different states or stages of the development of inner life.

(iii) Compounds like *ātma-rati*, the state of rejoicing in the self or Supreme Soul or *ātmārāma* (ChUp VII.25.2), one who rejoices in the Supreme Self, stand for the state of supreme bliss, *ātmavidyā*, the knowledge of the soul or spiritual science, *ātmaśuddhi*, purification of the self (BhG V.11), etc. are associated with the realisation of the Self.

(vi) *Adhyātma* is a profusely used compound which means 'inseparably related to *ātman*', also translated as 'spiritual'. But this word has different extensions of meaning according to the meaning of *ātman*. It is a group by itself on account of its extensive implications (→ *adhibhūta* etc.).

(v) Words related to the body (→ *śarīra*), i.e. words standing for *ātman* as the one to whom the body belongs or who has assumed the garb of the body or one who animates or regulates the body or one who 'knows' the body. There are three well-known words in this group, viz. *śarīrin*, *dehin* and *kṣetrajña* (who knows the *kṣetra* or body) *aṅgin* (one having limbs), and → *puruṣa* (man).

Layers of Meaning

The core meaning or *bindu* (point or seed) of '*ātman*' is inseparably related to the human quest for (i) the inner essence of all outward appearances, (ii) the intrinsic unity underlying all diversity, (iii) the formless underlying all forms, (iv) the timeless permeating all times, embodying both eternity and continuity, (v) the immutable pervading all mutables, (vi) the imperishable pervading all perishables, (vii) the unmanifest behind all that is manifest, (viii) the regulator Being at the root of all that is becoming, (ix) the Ultimate Reality at the 'beginning' of all creation, and (x) the essential nature of all things on the one hand and the different levels of identification of the human 'self' with different entities, starting with the body, on the other hand.

The above two streams of the core meaning of *ātman*, mutually complementary, are obvious in Vedic literature, including Brāhmaṇas and Upaniṣads. On the one side, the *ātman* is identified with body, *prāṇa* (vital air), speech, mind, etc., and on the other side it has been discovered as the immutable principle immanent in all beings. In a non-absolute sense *ātman* has been distinguished from *para* (the 'other').

Development of the Concept

In Vedic literature *ātman* first of all refers to the undivided being, before the split in body and soul. This *ātman*, body or self, is 'dear', as the seer addresses the sacrificial horse (*mā tvā tapat priya ātmāpiyantam ... RV I.162.20a*). Sāyaṇa comments on this: *priyaḥ ātmā bhogāyatanatvāt tava priyataro dehaḥ ...* "dear self because it is the basis of enjoyment, your dearest body ...". In the same sense the seer prays for the removal of sickness from the body:

यक्ष्मं सर्वस्मादात्मनस्तमिदं वि वृहामि ते ॥

RV X.163.5cd & 6cd

I am removing consumption from the whole of your body.

But *ātman* is also the total being which certainly includes the body.

बलं दधान आत्मनि करिष्यन् वीर्यम् ... ॥

RV IX.113.1c

When he (Indra) came showing forth his majesty and power, he drank of Soma juice and waxed exceeding strong (in himself).
(Tr. R.T.H. Griffith)

Being the total personality, the *ātman* of the father continues in the son:

आत्मा वै पुत्रनामासि ।

ŚāṅkhĀr IV.11, cf. ĀśvaGrhSū I.15.11

This idea of the non-duality of father and son is continued in the Brāhmaṇas and Upaniṣads.

आत्मा हि जज्ञ आत्मनः ... ।

पतिर्जायां प्रविशति गर्भो भूत्वा स मातरम् ।

तस्यां पुनर्नवो भूत्वा दशमे मासि जायते ॥

AitBr VII.13

The self (of the father) is born as the self (of the son). The husband enters the wife, becoming an embryo. In her he becomes once again and is born in the tenth month.

In the **Kauṣītaki Upaniṣad** it becomes clear that this continuity is both physical and psychical.

अङ्गादङ्गात् संभवसि हृदयादधिजायसे ।

आत्मा त्वं पुत्र ... ।

KauṣUp II.11

From every limb of mine you come! Right from my heart you are
born forth! You are myself (*ātman*) ... (Tr. R.E. Hume)

In the *Rgveda* it already means the innermost reality of anything, even of the
gods. *Ātman* is already understood as the self of all:

आत्मानं वस्यो अभि वातमर्चत ... ॥

RV X.92.13c

Sing lauds for your great bliss to Wind, the breath of all ...
(Tr. R.T.H. Griffith)

आत्मा देवानां भुवनस्य गर्भो यथावशं चरति देव एषः ।

RV X.168.4ab

Germ of the world, the Deities' vital spirit, this God moves even as his
will inclines him. (Tr. R.T.H. Griffith)

It is again *Vāyu* who is considered the soul and breath of the gods, because
of his all-pervasiveness. Similarly, *Sūrya* is the innermost life-principle and
regulator of the whole world:

आप्रा द्यावापृथिवी अन्तरिक्षं सूर्य आत्मा जगतस्तस्थुषश्च ॥

RV I.115.1cd

The soul of all that moveth not or moveth, the Sun hath filled the air
and earth and heaven. (Tr. R.T.H. Griffith)

Soma is also called "primeval Soul of sacrifice", *ātmā yajñasya pūrvyaḥ* (RV
IX.2.10).

The *Atharvaveda* constitutes a link with the Upanisadic concept of *ātman* as
the inner regulator of all beings. The cosmic pillar (*skambha*) and the mysterious
Being (*yakṣa*) are said to be *ātmanvat*, 'endowed with a self or with a soul':

स्कम्भ इदं सर्वमात्मन्वद् यत् प्राणन्निमिषच्च यत् ॥

AV X.8.2cd

Skambha is all this world of life, whatever breathes or shuts an eye.
(Tr. R.T.H. Griffith)

This *ātmanvat* is the support of everything. It resides within the body:

पुण्डरीकं नवद्वारं त्रिभिर्गुणेभिरावृतम् ।

तस्मिन् यद्यक्षमात्मन्वत् तद् वै ब्रह्मविदो विदुः ॥

अकामो धीरो अमृतः स्वयम्भु रसेन तृप्तो न कुतश्चनोनः ।

तमेव विद्वान् न बिभाय मृत्योरात्मानं धीरमजरं युवानम् ॥

AV X.8.43-44

Men versed in sacred knowledge know that living Being that abides.
In the nine-portalled Lotus Flower, enclosed with triple bands and
bonds.

Desireless, firm, immortal, self-existent, contented with the essence,
lacking nothing.

Free from the fear of Death is he who knoweth that Soul courageous,
youthful, undecaying. (Tr. R.T.H. Griffith)

The Brāhmaṇas also echo the same concept of *ātman* both in the sense of body and as the infinite entity that regulates and propels everything from within. *Ātman* is identified with the body when it is said to get fat or slim (*ātmā medayati ca kṛśyati ca*, TāṇḍMBr V.1.7), and when both the living and the dead body are called *ātman* (cf. ŚBr VIII.7.2.11). In a next step, the *ātman* is said to be constituted of speech (*vāc*), breath (*prāṇa*) and mind (*manas*) (cf. ŚBr XIV.4.3.10: *ayamātmā vāñmayo manomayaḥ prāṇamayah*). Again, the *ātman* or body is said to have six limbs (cf. KauṣBr XX.3). But ultimately *ātman* is the inner I-consciousness which is all-pervading:

आत्मानं वेद । अयमहमस्मीति ।

TBr III.10.11.1

Know the self thus: 'I am this'.

and:

सर्वं ह्ययमात्मा ।

ŚBr IV.2.2.1

All this is *ātman*.

The Upaniṣads present the same stream of thought as contained in the Brāhmaṇas, but they have further deepened and enlarged this concept. In the early Upaniṣads, the *ātman* is again identified with various aspects of the human being, from the most external to the innermost (cf. ChUp VIII.7.12). The *ātman* which the seekers of the Upaniṣads desire is described as:

य आत्माऽपहतपाप्मा विजरो विमृत्युर्विशोको विजिघत्सोऽपिपासः सत्यकामः सत्यसंकल्पः
सोऽन्वेष्टव्यः स विजिज्ञासितव्यः ।

ChUp VIII.7.1

The Self (*Ātman*), which is free from evil, ageless, deathless, sorrowless, hungerless, thirstless, whose desire is the Real, whose conception is the Real – He should be searched out, Him one should desire to understand. (Tr. R.E. Hume)

The *ātman* is also a cosmogonic principle.

तस्माद्वा एतस्मादात्मन आकाशः संभूतः । आकाशाद्वायुः । वायोरग्निः । अग्रेरापः । अद्भ्यः
पृथिवी । पृथिव्या ओषधयः । ओषधीभ्योऽन्नम् । अन्नात्पुरुषः ।

TUp II.1

From this Soul (*Ātman*), verily, space (*ākāśa*) arose; from space, wind (*vāyu*); from wind, fire; from fire, water; from water, the earth; from the earth, herbs; from herbs, food; from food the person (*puruṣa*).
(Tr. R.E. Hume)

It was alone at the beginning:

आत्मैवेदमग्र आसीत् ।

BrUp I.4.1

In the beginning this world was Soul (*Ātman*) alone ...
(Tr. R.E. Hume)

It desired a second, and thus creation was born:

सोऽकामयत-द्वितीयो म आत्मा जायेतेति ।

BrUp I.2.4

He desired: 'Would that a second self of me were produced'!
(Tr. R.E. Hume)

This ultimate principle is in fact everything: *ātmaivedaṃ sarvaṃ* (ChUp VII.25.2). It is all-pervading:

अथात आत्मादेश, एवात्मैवाधस्ताद्, आत्मोपरिष्ठाद्, आत्मा पश्चाद् आत्मा पुरस्ताद्
आत्मा दक्षिणतः, आत्मोत्तरतः, आत्मैवेदं सर्वमिति । स वा एष एवं पश्यन्नेवं मन्वान,
एवं विजानन्, आत्मरतिरात्मक्रीड आत्ममिथुन, आत्मानन्दः स स्वराड् भवति । तस्य
सर्वेषु लोकेषु कामचारो भवति ।

ChUp VII.25.2

Now next, the instruction with regard to the soul (*ātmādeśa*)—

The Soul (*Ātman*) indeed, is below. The Soul is above. the Soul is to the west. The Soul is to the east. The Soul is to the south. The Soul is to the north. The Soul, indeed, is this whole world.

Verily, he who sees this, who thinks this, who understands this, who has pleasure in the Soul, who has delight in the Soul, who has intercourse with the Soul, who has bliss in the Soul – he is autonomous (*sva-rāj*); he has unlimited freedom in the worlds.

(Tr. R.E. Hume)

The *ātman* is thus not only the all-pervading Reality, in which everything is

centered just as the spokes in the hub of the wheel (cf. BrUp II.5.15), it is also the most desirable thing:

न वा अरे सर्वस्य कामाय सर्वं प्रियं भवत्यात्मनस्तु कामाय सर्वं प्रियं भवति । आत्मा
वा अरे द्रष्टव्यः श्रोतव्यो मन्तव्यो निदिध्यासितव्यो मैत्रेय्यात्मनि खल्वरे दृष्टे श्रुते मते
विज्ञात इदं सर्वं विदितम् ।

BrUp IV.5.6

Lo, verily not for love of all is all dear, but for love of the Soul all is dear. Lo, verily, it is the Soul (*Ātman*) that should be seen, that should be hearkened to, that should be thought on, that should be pondered on, O Maitreyī. Lo verily, in the Soul's being seen, hearkened to, thought on, understood, this world – all is known. (Tr. R.E. Hume)

But the *ātman* cannot be known, as an object is known, since it is the very nature of the knower itself (cf. BrUp IV.5.15). This kind of non-dual knowledge is in fact liberation.

A mere knowledge of words is not enough to be liberated from sorrow, therefore the seeker in the **Chāndogya Upaniṣad** says: *mantravidevāsmi nātmaavid ... tarati śokamātmavit* (ChUp VII.1.3). "I am only a knower of *mantra*, not of the Self ... (only) knowing the Self does one overcome sorrow":

यस्तु सर्वाणि भूतान्यात्मन्नेवानुपश्यति ।
सर्वभूतेषु चात्मानं ततो न विजुगुप्सते ॥
यस्मिन् सर्वाणि भूतान्यात्मैवाभूद् विजानतः ।
तत्र को मोहः कः शोक एकत्वमनुपश्यतः ॥
ĪsUp 6-7

Now, he who on all beings
Looks just (*eva*) in the Self (*Ātman*),
And on the Self as in all beings—
He does not shrink away from Him.
In whom all beings—
Have become just (*eva*) the Self of the discerners—
Then what delusion, what sorrow (*śoka*) is there
Of him who perceives the unity! (Tr. R.E. Hume)

However, the same **Īśa Upaniṣad** contains the expression *ātmahan*, 'killer of the self, which indicates a non-absolute conception (ĪsUp 3). It also means metaphorically one who suppresses the real nature of the *ātman*. The *ātman* is not only the ultimate Reality, identified with →*brahman*, it is also the unifying link among all things (*sūtra*, cf. BrUp III.7.1), the inner ruler or regulator (*antaryāmin*, cf. BrUp III.7), and the bridge or dam (*setu*), both uniting and keeping apart the

two worlds, here and beyond (cf. BrUp IV.4.22; ChUp VIII.4.1).

The double meaning of *ātman* as self and Supreme Self emerges clearly in the *Kātha Upaniṣad*:

एको वशी सर्वभूतान्तरात्मा एकं रूपं बहुधा यः करोति ।
तमात्मस्थं येऽनुपश्यन्ति धीरास्तेषां सुखं शाश्वतं नेतरेषाम् ॥

KathUp V.12

The Inner Soul (*antarātman*) of all things, the One Controller,
Who makes his one form manifold—
The wise who perceive Him as standing in oneself,
They, and no others, have eternal happiness! (Tr. R.E. Hume)

The *ātman* can only be perceived by a subtle intellect:

नायमात्मा प्रवचनेन लभ्यो न मेधया न बहुना श्रुतेन ।
यमेवैष वृणुते तेन लभ्यस्तस्यैष आत्मा विवृणुते तनूं स्वाम् ॥
एष सर्वेषु भूतेषु गूढोऽत्मा न प्रकाशते ।
दृश्यते त्वग्रया बुद्ध्या सूक्ष्मया सूक्ष्मदर्शिभिः ॥

KathUp II.23, III.12

This Soul (*Ātman*) is not to be obtained by instruction,
Nor by intellect, nor by much learning.
He is to be obtained only by the one whom he chooses;
To such a one that Soul (*Ātman*) reveals his own person (*tanūṃ svām*).
Though He is hidden in ;all things,
That Soul (*Ātman*, Self) shines not forth.
But he is seen by subtle seers
With superior, subtle intellect. (Tr. R.E. Hume)

Without going into further details of the rich conception of *ātman* in the Upaniṣads, we can conclude that *ātman* is basically the integrated intelligent principle (*samaṣṭi cetana tattva*), the ultimate, underlying substratum of all that is tangible. Its identifications with the body and its various organs are, so to say, stepping-stones on the way to the discovery of the ultimate principle, similarly as in the case of *brahman*.

The *Bhagavad-Gītā* contains a whole philosophy of *ātman*, reaching from its association with mind, inner organ or individual self to the undying inner principle, and to the supreme Self (cf. BhG II.55; VI.5–8, 20; X.20, etc.).

Essentially, the *ātman* is unaffected by birth, death and by any qualities.

न जायते म्रियते वा कदाचिन्नायं भूत्वा भविता वा न भूयः ।

अजो नित्यः शाश्वतोऽयं पुराणो न हन्यते हन्यमाने शरीरे ॥

BhG II.20

He (*śarīrin*) is not born, nor doth he die; nor having been, ceaseth he any more to be; unborn, perpetual, eternal and ancient, he is not slain when the body is slaughtered. (Tr. A. Besant and B. Das)

अनादित्वान्निर्गुणत्वात् परमात्माऽयमव्ययः ।

शरीरस्थोऽपि कौन्तेय न करोति न लिप्यते ॥

यथा सर्वगतं सौक्ष्म्यादाकाशं नोपलिप्यते ।

सर्वत्रावस्थितो देहे तथात्मा नोपलिप्यते ॥

यथा प्रकाशयत्येकः कृत्स्नं लोकमिमं रविः ।

क्षेत्रं क्षेत्री तथा कृत्स्नं प्रकाशयति भारत ॥

BhG XIII.31-33

Being beginningless and without qualities, the imperishable supreme Self, though seated in the body, O Kaunteya! worketh not, nor is affected.

As the omnipresent ether is not affected by reason of its subtlety, so seated everywhere in the body the Self is not affected.

As the one Sun illumineth this whole world, so the Lord of the Field illumineth the whole Field, O Bhārata. (Tr. A. Besant and B. Das)

What is interesting in the **Bhagavad-Gītā** is the use of the primary and secondary meanings of *ātman* together, or of the *nirguṇa* and *saguṇa*, as becomes clear in expressions like *ātmaivātmanā jitaḥ* (VI.6), "conquering the (unconditioned) Self with (one's) self", or *ātmanyevātmanā tuṣṭaḥ* (II.55), "being satisfied by oneself in the Self". Ultimately, it is the Lord who is the true or Supreme Self (cf. IX.5; X.20, etc.).

The same usage is found in the **Mahābhārata** in general, where, e.g. Viṣṇu is called *ātman* (cf. MBh XII.334.7). As Vāsudeva he is also called *sarvātman*, the soul of all (MBh I.1.118). The vision of the *ātman* is said to be possible with the help of the intellect (*buddhi*):

तमःपरिगतं वेश्म यथा दीपेन दृश्यते ।

तथा बुद्धिप्रदीपेन शक्य आत्मा निरीक्षितुम् ॥

MBh XII.313.40

Just as the house enveloped by darkness is seen with a candle, similarly *ātman* can be seen with the candle of *buddhi* (intellect).

Certainly, '*ātman*' in the above passage cannot stand for the transcendent reality that is beyond the comprehension of any instruments (inner or outer);

buddhi is only an inner instrument. In the reflexive sense also it is made clear that self-knowledge is difficult to achieve:

श्रोत्रादीनि न पश्यन्ति स्वं स्वमात्मानमात्मना ।

MBh XII.196.5ab

The ears and other sense organs do not see themselves by themselves.

In Āyurveda, *ātman* has thus been described in the **Caraka Saṃhitā**:

निर्विकारः परस्त्वात्मा सत्त्वभूतगुणेन्द्रियैः ।

चैतन्ये कारणं नित्यो द्रष्टा पश्यति हि क्रियाः ॥

CarSam SūSthā I.56

The supreme self is devoid of abnormalities, is the cause of consciousness with the conjunction of mind, properties of *bhūtas* and sense-organs, is eternal and seer who sees all the actions.

(Tr. P.V. Sharma)

Thus the *ātman*, according to Caraka, is neither the *karṭṛ* (doer), nor is it sentient or intelligent. It is the seer of actions and becomes the cause of intelligence or sentience. This conjoined form of body, senses, mind etc. is the conscious person (*cetana puruṣa*).

According to Āyurveda *ātman* also forms part of the 'aggregate' (*saṅghāta*) and hence it is *saguṇa*.

This organic (*saṅghāta*) form of *puruṣa* is *vyāvahārika* (on the practical level as distinct from Reality). Hence:

प्रभवो न ह्यनादित्वाद् विद्यते परमात्मनः ।

पुरुषो राशिसंज्ञस्तु मोहेच्छाद्वेषकर्मजः ॥

CarSam ŚāSthā I.53

The *paramātman* is beginningless and hence has no 'birth' but the *puruṣa* known as aggregate is born of infatuation (*moha*), desire (*icchā*), abhorrence (*dveṣa*), and *karman*.

The **Suśruta Saṃhitā** (ŚāSthā I.16) presents a treatment of *jīvātman* under the name *kṣetrajña*. In Āyurveda, there has been no need to accept an *ātman* like *antaryāmin*. It has been made clear in the above text that Āyurveda does not accept all-pervasive (*sarvagata*) and eternal *kṣetrajñas*, rather it postulates non-pervasive but eternal *kṣetrajñas*, who move about in various bodily forms (*yonī*) according to righteous (*dharma*) or unrighteous (*adharma*) actions; they are very subtle, sentient and eternal and manifest physically in combinations of blood and semen.

Karmapuruṣa, the person as the doer of actions is another term used in

Āyurveda and that is a conjunction of the gross elements (*bhūtas*) and *śarīrin*, the embodied soul. It is that *karmapuruṣa* who is the object of medical treatment.

देहशब्देनात्र कर्मपुरुषस्य चिकित्साधिकृतस्य विवक्षितत्वात् ।

Dalhaṇa on SuSam Uttaratantra LXVI.6-7

Here the word denotes the person (*karmapuruṣa*) being the object of treatment. (Tr. P.V. Sharma)

Since Āyurveda is concerned with the human beings as subject of treatment, the transcendent or all-pervasive nature of *ātman* has not been expounded.

The Jaina system accepts *ātman* to be a substance (*dravya*), which had been defined by Kundakundācārya in the following way:

द्रव्यं सल्लक्षणकं उत्पादव्ययध्रुवत्वसंयुक्तम् ।

गुणपर्यायाश्रयं वा यत्तद्भ्रणन्ति सर्वज्ञा ॥

Pkāsā 10

A *dravya* is that which is of the nature of *sat* (existent), it has *utpāda* (addition), *vyaya* (subtraction) and *dhruvattva* (permanence); it is the receptacle of *guṇa* (quality and *pariyāya* (alteration)).

The Jaina system accepts the *dhruva* (unchangeable), permanent nature of all *dravyas* in spite of their being associated with addition and subtraction. This theory of the Jainas is *pariṇāminityatā-vāda*, i.e. the theory of eternity of the *pariṇāmin* (that which is with *pariṇāma* or change). Hence *ātman* is *pariṇāma-dravya* and yet eternal.

The *pariṇāmi-bhāvas* (states) of *ātman* are enumerated as *bhavyatva* (beauty), *abhavyatva* (ugliness), *astitva* (existence), *anyatva* (otherness), *kartṛtva* (the state of being a doer), *bhokṛtva* (the state of being an enjoyer), *saguṇatva* (being with qualities), *avyāpakatva* (non-pervasiveness), *anāditva* (beginninglessness), *karmabaddhatva* (being bound with action), *arūpatva* (formlessness), *nityatva* (eternal nature), etc. (cf. TaSū II.7). *Ātman* is twofold: *saṃsārīn*, involved in the world of becoming, and *mukta*, free (*ibid.* II.10).

The *ātman*, according to the Jaina system, neither atomic (*aṇu-rūpa*) nor is it large (*vibhu*) according to other systems; rather it is of the measure of the body, *svadehaparimāṇa*. It stays in the measure of the body attained by it which may be large (like an elephant) or small (like an ant). *Ātman* is the formless doer who acts with *upayoga* (this word is technical).

जीवः उपयोगमयः अमूर्तिः कर्ता स्वदेहपरिमाणः ।

भोक्ता संसारस्थः सिद्धः स विस्त्रसा ऊर्ध्वगतिः ॥

DSaṅg 2

Jīva is the formless doer full of *upayoga*, bearing the measure of his body, the enjoyer, when he is in *saṃsāra*; when he becomes *siddha* he attains upward movement.

The treatment of *ātman* in the Jaina system is thus definitely of the *saguṇa* category.

It is generally understood that the Buddha refuted the idea of a substantial *ātman*, and hence Buddhism has adopted *anattā*, or *anātma-vāda*, i.e. the theory that there is no permanent self. But in fact the Buddha never explicitly denied *ātman*, and if so, he only refuted the popular concept of the permanence of a limited, individual self. This finite *ātman* is described in the **Majjhima Nikāya** in six ways:

अत्थि मे अत्ता, नत्थि मे अत्ता, अत्तना व अत्तानं सज्जानामि, अत्तना व अनत्तानं सज्जानामि, अनत्तना व अत्तानं सज्जानामि, यो मे अयं अत्ता वदो वेदेय्यो तत्र तत्र कल्याण-पापकानं कम्मनं विपाकं पटिसंवेदेति सो खो पन मे अयं अत्ता निच्चो धुवो सस्सतो अविपरिणामधम्मो सस्सतिसमं तथेव ठस्सतीति ॥

MajNik I.8 (P.T.S.)

(i) My *ātman* is there, (ii) my *ātman* is not there, (iii) I know (or name) the *ātman* with *ātman*, (iv) I know the *anātman* with *anātman*, (v) I know the *ātman* with *anātman* and (vi) that which is known as my *ātman* is *vedya* (knowable). The *ātman* knows the good deeds and sinful deeds; that *ātman* of mine is eternal, permanent or unchangeable, imperishable and without *pariṇāma*. One who has these views cannot attain liberation from pain.

This kind of *ātman* is denied because it becomes the source of all kinds of false associations and identifications, and hence it is an obstacle to *nirvāṇa*. *Ātmavāda* is characterised by I-ness (*ahantā*) and my-ness (*mamatā*) (cf. MajNik *uparipaṇṇāsaka*, IX.4.4), and it is absurd to ascribe *ātman* to the senses, their objects, to mind, knowledge, feeling and its objects, which are *anātman*. Similarly, twenty *ātma-dṛṣṭis* are described and are called false (*mitthā*). Hence the Buddhist philosophers make *anattā* (*anātman*) the basis of the treatment of *attā* (*ātman*) (cf. *Ānattālakkaṇa-Sutta*, *anattapariyāya*, I.8.20–23 of Mahāvagga, VinPiṭ). The five *skandhas*, viz. *rūpa*, *vedanā*, *saṃjñā*, *saṃskāra* and *viññāna* constitute *anattā*, being of transitory and painful nature. This implies that *ātman* should be eternal as distinct from *anātman*, but any such positive statement is carefully avoided, because it might again become the source of wrong identifications.

When the eternal and real existence of *ātman* is not accepted, it remains as a mere practical alternative, *vastuśūnya-śabdānupātī*, i.e. it is referred to by a word without there being any substance. In that case, the body, *skandhas* (individually

and collectively) and their *saṅghāta*, aggregate are called *ātman* in the relative sense.

The **Dhammapada** has used *attā* in this general meaning.

अत्ता हि अत्तनो नत्थि कुतो पुत्ता कुतो धनम् ॥

DhPad V.3cd

The *ātman* does not belong to oneself, where is the son and where are riches?

Here the first *attā* refers to the body and the second refers to the above aggregate (*saṅghāta*).

दारुं नमयन्ति तच्छका अत्तानं दमयन्ति पण्डिता ॥

DhPad VI.5cd

Just as the carpenters bend or control the wood, similarly the knowledgeable ones control the *attā*.

एकं च जेय्यमत्तानं स वे संगामजुत्तमो ॥

DhPad VIII.4cd

The one who vanquishes the *attā* is the best among the winners of battle (warriors).

In the above two, *attā* refers to mind and senses which have to be controlled.

अत्ता हि अत्तनो नाथो ।

DhPad XII.4a

Attā is the master of *attā*.

Here the controlled mind is said to-be the master of the 'aggregate'.

It becomes clear from the Buddhist texts that what the Buddha denied an ultimate reality and permanence is not the *ātman* described in the Upaniṣads, which is also removed from any associations and objectification. It is only the transient, individual entity that has been denied an ultimate value.

The texts of the Tantras are numerous and associated with various systems of spiritual culture like Śaiva, Śākta, Bauddha, Vaiṣṇava, etc. Here only a few of the main texts of the Śaiva tradition are touched very briefly.

Ātman has been reviewed in five states, viz. *ātman*, *antarātman*, *bāhyātman*, *nirātman* and *paramātman* in the **Svacchanda Tantra**:

आत्मा चैवान्तरात्मा च बाह्यात्मा चैव सुन्दरि ॥

निरात्मा परमात्मैतान् कथयामि समासतः ।

प्रधानसाम्यमाश्रित्य सुखदुःखविवर्जितः ॥
 यदा तस्मिन् स्थितो देवि तदात्मा तु स उच्यते ।
 पुर्यष्टकसमायोगात् पर्यटत् सर्वयोनिषु ॥
 अन्तरात्मा स विज्ञेयो निबद्धस्तु शुभाशुभैः ।
 बुद्धिकर्मेन्द्रियैर्युक्तो महाभूतैः समावृतः ॥
 बाह्यात्मा तु तदा देवि भुङ्क्तेऽसौ विषयान् सदा ।
 भूतभावविनिर्मुक्तस्तत्त्वधर्मकलोद्भिज्जितः ॥
 मलधर्मैकयुक्तात्मा मायाधर्मतिरस्कृतः ।
 निरात्मा तु तदा ज्ञेयः परमात्माऽथ कथ्यते ॥
 मलकर्मकलाद्यैस्तु निर्मुक्तश्च यदा प्रिये ।
 सर्वाध्वसमतीतश्च मायामोहोज्झितश्च यः ॥
 निर्मलत्वं यदा याति पदं परममव्ययम् ।
 परमात्मा तदा देवि ! प्रोच्यते प्रभुरव्ययः ॥

SvT XI.82cd-83ab, 84cd-90

O beautiful lady, I tell you briefly about five kinds of *ātman*. They are *ātma*, *antarātma*, *bāhyātma*, *nirātma* and *paramātma*.

Ātman is said to be one who has become free from pleasure and pain after getting merged in the equilibrium of *pradhāna* (*prakṛti*).

(Kṣemarāja says that this sort of *ātman* remains dissolved in *prakṛti* and, therefore, it is a state of stupor (*prakṛtīlīnatvād vyāmūḍhaḥ*) for the soul. It has the body of sheaths (*kañcukas*) and lies dissolved in *prakṛti*.)

Antarātman, the inner *ātman* is one which wanders about in different forms of existence in association with eight components of its body (*puryaṣṭaka*, the eight *purīs* or 'cities'), viz. *manas*, *buddhi*, *ahaṃkāra* and five subtle elements. As it is firmly attached with the residual trace of good and evil deeds, it is compelled to be born in different sorts of life (*yonī*).

Bāhyātman (the external *ātman*) is one which is endowed with internal and external senses, covered completely with five gross elements and enjoys continuously all the objects.

Nirātman is not only free from elements both gross and subtle, but free from intellectual concepts. It has also got rid of attributes of being a category (*tattva*) and has shaken off five sheaths. But still it is attached with one defilement called *āṇava-mala* and therefore it is still limited (*saṅkucita-svabhāva*) and is forced to remain so by *māyāśakti*.

Paramātman is such from whom all defilements, viz. *āṇava*, *māyīya*

and *kārma malas* are totally absent. It transcends all thirty-six *tattvas* and is far removed from all sorts of limitations. Thus when it is free from all sorts of impurities, it attains the eternal and the supreme state of Lordship. Then it is known as *paramātman*.

(Tr. H.N. Chakravarty)

Several levels of *ātman* are mentioned in the *Śāradā-Tilaka*:

आत्मानमन्तरात्मानं परमात्मानमर्चयेत् ॥

ज्ञानात्मानं च विधिवत् पीठमन्त्रावसानकम् ।

ŚāTil IV.68cd-69ab

One should worship *ātman*, *antarātman*, *paramātman* and *jñānātman* in its proper sequence (or prescribed manner). It is followed by the worship of *pīṭhaśaktis* (with *mantras*). (Tr. H.N. Chakravarty)

The transcendent nature of *ātman* is thus described:

खद्योतकनिभं सूक्ष्मं करणैस्तु विवर्जितम् ॥

कार्येणैव विहीनं च मायाप्रध्वस्तगोचरम् ।

SvT II.34cd-35ab

Ātman is subtle like fire-flies, is devoid of inner and outer instruments and also their results (effects). Even *māyā* has been thrown asunder on account of which time and *niyati*, etc. cannot function.

(Tr. H.N. Chakravarty)

Kṣemarāja says that the *ātman* is thus purified before going to worship one's desired deity. When the aspirant becomes steady in the pure concept of *ātman*, he meditates thus: *ahameva paramo haṁsaḥ śivaḥ paramakāraṇam*, "I myself am the supreme *haṁsa*, Śiva who is the highest source."

The principle of consciousness (*caitanya*) in *ātman* is thus described:

चैतन्यं दृक्क्रियारूपं तदस्त्यात्मनि सर्वदा ।

सर्वतश्च यतो मुक्तौ श्रूयते सर्वतोमुखम् ॥

सदप्यभासमानत्वात् तन्निरुद्धं प्रतीयते ।

वश्योऽनावृतवीर्यस्य सोऽत एवाविमोक्षणम् ॥

MrgĀ vp II.5-6

Consciousness in the form of knowledge and activity is always and everywhere present in the self (*ātman*), for it is heard that in the state of liberation it is universally present. Though being in existence, it is not manifested, for it is experienced as if hindered. Therefore, as long as the self is not liberated, it has to be under the control of Him whose power (*vīrya*) is unshrouded. (Tr. B. Bäumer)

Ātman is one, yet differentiated as being sixfold:

आत्मानं भावयेत् पश्चादेककं जलचन्द्रवत् ।
कृत्योपाधिवशाद् भिन्नं षोढाऽभिन्नं तु वस्तुतः ॥

TĀI XVI.80

(After receiving permission from the *guru*, the disciple) should later think of himself as one reflected in the water like the moon. It appears different as sixfold on account of accidental attributes (*upādhi*) related to action (*kṛtya*) but really it is undifferentiated. (The sixfold differentiation is based on the six *kāraṅkas* or case-endings). (Tr. H.N. Chakravarty)

The *ātman* is equated with Śiva:

आत्मा शिवस्वभावः ।

TSā I

The self is (of) the very nature of Śiva.

The sample illustrations from a few texts of Tantra bear evidence to the fact that just like Vedic literature, the Tantras also use the word *ātman* in both the secondary and primary meanings.

Darśanas

The Śāṃkhya system uses the word *puruṣa* alone and Gauḍapāda, commenting on the *Sāṃkhya-Kārikā* (17), has equated *puruṣa* with *ātman*.

Vijñānabhikṣu, in his commentary on the *Sāṃkhya-Sūtra* (I.102) has equated *puruṣa* with *ātman* and *prakṛti* with *anātman*.

निर्गुणत्वान्न चिद्धर्मा ।

ज्ञाने नैवात्मनो धर्मो न गुणो वा कथंचन ।

ज्ञानस्वरूप एवात्मा नित्यः (सर्वगतः) पूर्णः सदा शिवः ॥

Comm. on SāṃSū I.146

On account of being *nirguṇa* (the *puruṣa*) does not have *cit* (intelligence) as its attribute or quality.

Jñāna (intelligence or knowledge) is never the quality or attribute of *ātman*. *Ātman* is of the essence of *jñāna*, it is eternal, perfect and always Śiva (the embodiment of God).

Here *ātman* has been said to be the essence of intelligence rather than having

intelligence as its attribute. Just as Sāṃkhya accepts a plurality of *puruṣas* the *ātman* is also plural (cf. Yūdīp on SāṃKā 15 and 19).

Like Sāṃkhya, the Yoga system also equates *ātman* and *puruṣa*.

The imposition of *ātman* on *anātman* is called nescience (*avidyā*) (YSū II.5). This *avidyā* is called *ātma-bhāva-bhāvanā* (contemplation on the identification with *ātman*).

विशेषदर्शिन आत्मभावभावनानिवृत्तिः ॥

YSū IV.25

The *yogin* with a special vision gets rid of *ātma-bhāva-bhāvanā*.

The nature of *puruṣa* or *ātman* is *caitanya*, intelligence, just as in Sāṃkhya (YSū VyBh I.9).

The commentator Vyāsa has given I-consciousness the name *ātmabodha* combined with mind (*citta*) and has thus accepted the direct perception of *ātman* (YSūBh I.32). The *ātman* being the seat of I-consciousness has been called *aṇumātra* (atomic).

The word *ātman* has also been used for the nature or essence of something, e.g.:

तदर्थ एव दृश्यस्यात्मा ॥

YSū II.21

The nature of the object of vision is rooted in Him (*puruṣa*).

Bhoja's Vṛtti on Yoga-Sūtra contains an important statement:

इत्थं सर्वेष्वपि दर्शनेष्वधिष्ठातृत्वं विहाय नान्यदात्मनो रूपमुपपद्यते ।

अधिष्ठातृत्वं च चिद्रूपत्वं । तच्च जडाद् वैलक्षण्यमेव ।

Vṛtti on YSū IV.33

Thus in all the systems of philosophy the nature of *ātman* is nothing but being the *adhiṣṭhātṛ* (supreme presiding principle). The state of being *adhiṣṭhātṛ* is the state of being the essence of intelligence and that is distinct from the insentient.

The Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika systems have a similar approach to *ātman*.

The Nyāya-Sūtra (III.1) deals with *ātman* as a *dravya* or substance, in 27 *sūtras*. Vātsyāyana's commentary on these *sūtras* is the main source of this line of thought. Similarly the Vaiśeṣika-Sūtra with the *Praśastapāda-Bhāṣya* and Śaṅkara Mīśra's commentary is the main source for the Vaiśeṣika system.

The views of both these systems are being summarised below on the basis of the above sources.

(a) The Bhāṣya on the Nyāya-Sūtra has raised the question as to whether *ātman* is the aggregate of mind, *buddhi* and *vedanas* (experiences) or whether it belongs to a different category (NyBh III.1.1–3). Since the objects of *indriyas* are different, only the *cetana ātman* can be their unitary subject (*grahītṛ*, one who receives or perceives).

(b) The body is not the *ātman* because the dead body is set to fire, but not the living body, hence the existence of *jīva* is proved (NyBh III.1.4–6).

(c) *Ātman* cannot be equated with the mind, because mind is also an *indriya*, an instrument; the user of the instrument has to be different from the mind.

(d) *Ātman* is the eternal abode of the impressions of previous experience (*pūrvānubhava-saṃskāra*) which are carried from one birth to another. Persons who have got rid of *rāga* (attraction towards objects) are not re-born (NyBh III.1.19–27).

(e) Inference (*anumāna*) does not operate unless it is preceded by direct perception. How could *ātman* be cognised through inference without there being a direct perception? The I-consciousness is comprised of a direct perception and that is accepted as a partial perception of the *ātman*, which becomes the basis of inference.

A few extracts regarding the cognition of *ātman* through inference might be interesting.

तत्रात्मा तावत् प्रत्यक्षतो न गृह्यते । स किमातोऽपुदेशमात्रादेव प्रतिपद्यत इति नेत्युच्यते ।
अनुमानाच्च प्रतिपत्तव्य इति ।

NyBh I.1.10

The soul is not apprehended by perception. The question then arises whether it is known by means of 'reliable assertion'. The answer is that it is not so, as the soul is cognised by means of inference also. (Tr. G.N. Jha)

Therefore:

तत्रात्मा सर्वस्य द्रष्टा सर्वस्य भोक्ता सर्वज्ञः सर्वानुभावी ।

NyBh I.1.9

Of these, the soul is the perceiver (of all that brings about pain and pleasure), the experiencer (of all pains and pleasures), the knower of all (pains and pleasures and their causes) who gets at all things. (Tr. G.N. Jha)

The Vaiśeṣika system also accepts inference as the means of the cognition of *ātman*. The main postulations of this system are as follows:

Ātman is *dravya* (substance):

पृथिव्यापः आत्मा मन इति द्रव्याणि ॥

VaiśSū I.1.5

Ātman (self) is one of the nine substances, viz. earth, water, etc.

To say that *ātman* is a substance (*dravya*) means that it is the material cause of knowledge, pleasure, pain, effort, etc.

तत्रात्मा मनश्च अप्रत्यक्षे ॥

VaiśSū VIII.1.2

Among substances the self, the mind and a few others (namely *ākāśa*, time, etc.) are not perceptible (i.e. these are to be inferred).

There are certain invariable marks (*liṅga*) for proving the existence of *ātman* which are thus enumerated:

प्राणापान-निमेषोन्मेष-जीवन-मनोगतीन्द्रियान्तरविकाराः सुखदुःखेच्छाद्वेष-प्रयत्नाश्चात्मनो लिङ्गानि ॥

VaiśSū III.2.4

The inferential marks of (the existence of) the self are: *prāṇa* (the ascending air), *apāna* (the descending air), *nimeṣa* (closing of the eye-lids), *unmeṣa* (opening of the eye-lids), life, mental activities, modifications of the other senses, pleasure, pain, desire, aversion and volition.

The five works beginning with *sukha* are the direct qualities of *ātman*, the preceding ones simply bear proximity with *ātman*.

विभवान् महानाकाशस्तथा चात्मा ॥

VaiśSū VII.1.22

Ātman is pervasive and vast like space.

On account of the capacity of being in conjunction with all bodies, space (*ākāśa*, the sound-producing substance) is immensely vast, i.e. all-pervading; so is also the self. It is not atomic or *aṇuparimāṇa* like the mind and of middle size or *madhya-parimāṇa* like the body.

Like other substances *ātman* is also the seat and *samavāyi-kāraṇa* (substantial cause) of *kriyā* (action) and *guṇa* (quality) (cf. VaiśSū I.1.15).

Further, *ātman* is the basis (*āśraya*) of knowledge (*jñāna*), i.e. it is the knower (*jñātṛ*), because *jñāna* (perception) is born of the coming together of *ātman*, *indriya* and object (cf. VaiśSū III.1.18).

Thus both Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika systems maintain the *saguṇa* state of *ātman* and its plurality.

The Mīmāṃsā school accepts the individuated form of *ātman*, viz. *jīva*. The *karṭṛ* (doer) of *karmans* (deeds) and the *bhokṭṛ* (enjoyer) of the fruits of actions is said to be *puruṣa* (*ātman*) (MīmSū IV.1.3; IV.1.1–2; II.7.18–21 and II.4.2).

Śabaravāmin commenting on the **Mīmāṃsā-Sūtra** (I.1.5) has dealt with *ātman* in detail and has established *ātman* as knower (*jñātṛ*) who is distinct from knowledge (*jñāna*). He says that *ātman* is inferred because a thing that was attained earlier is again desired and this proves that there is the constant existence of the one who desires. Similarly, memory has been said to bear evidence of the continuous existence of *ātman*. *Ātman* can be known only by oneself, i.e. it is *sva-saṃvedya*.

स्वसंवेद्यः स भवति, नासावन्येन शक्यते द्रष्टुम् पुरुषः स्वयमात्मानमुपलभते न चान्यस्मै शक्नोति दर्शयितुम् सोऽप्यन्यः पुरुषः स्वयमात्मानमुपलभते न च परात्मानम् । तेन सर्वे स्वेन स्वेनाऽऽत्मनाऽऽत्मानमुपलभमानाः सन्त्येव, यद्यपि परपुरुषं नोपलभन्ते ।

Śabara on MīmSū I.1.5

Ātman is *sva-saṃvedya*, it knows itself, it cannot be seen by another (person). Hence the *puruṣa* knows its own *ātman*, but cannot show it to anybody else; the other *puruṣa* also knows his own self, but not the self of the other. All, therefore, surely know their own selves by themselves, although they do not know the other *puruṣa* (*ātman*). (Tr. R.S. Bhattacharya)

Thus the plurality of *ātman* is accepted:

महाभौतिकदेहस्था यथात्मानः सचेतनाः । ... नित्यचैतन्याः पुमांसो देहवृत्तयः । गृह्णन्ति करणातीतान् रूपादीनां ... ।

ŚIVā Śabdādhikaraṇa, 407

The *ātmans* are *sacetana*, with sentience or intelligence and not consciousness itself (*caitanya-rūpa* like in Sāṃkhya and Vedānta) and they are seated in the body made of gross elements. The *puruṣas* are eternal spirits (*caitanya*) with a mode or state (*vṛtti*) of body; they perceive the objects like form (*rūpa*) etc. that are beyond the organs (*karaṇas*).

While Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika speak only of the continuity of *ātman*, Mīmāṃsā speaks of its eternity.

नित्यः सन्नात्मा शरीराभ्यन्तरवर्ती सर्वगतः, आत्मानानात्वे तु अदोषः सर्वगतत्वात्

सिद्धमात्मनो निश्चलत्वम् ।

TVā II.1.5

The eternal and all-pervading self exists inside the body. There is no fault in holding the plurality of selves. The self has no motion since it is all-pervading.

The Mīmāṃsā system has no place of *paramātman* or *Īśvara* and a plurality of *ātman* is accepted. Maṇḍana Miśra is the only exception; he has established *ātman* as being one in his work entitled **Brahmasiddhi**.

Vedānta is the system which has most extensively reflected on *ātman*. It is generally equated with the monistic (*advaita*) school established by Śaṅkarācārya in the foot-steps of Gauḍapāda. In this section we will confine ourselves to the said system and the others will be taken up under Śaiva and Vaiṣṇava traditions.

Upaniṣads, the **Brahma-Sūtra** and the **Bhagavad-Gītā**—these three constitute the *Prasthāna-trayī* of Vedānta. The **Śāṅkara Bhāṣya** on these three, specially on the **Brahma-Sūtra** is the prime source expanded and supported by numerous texts over the centuries.

The main postulations of *advaita* with regard to *ātman* could thus be summarised:

- (a) The unity of *ātman* with individual soul (*jīva*) and world (*jagat*) is established (cf. ŚBh on BrSū I.3.1–5, 4.6–22; II.1.14, 3.47–48; III.2.12–15; IV.1.3, 3.14, etc.).
- (b) Creation (*śṛṣṭi*) takes place in one and the same *ātman* like a dream; just as the dreamer creates 'chariot, horse and road', without any modification (*vikāra*) in the essential nature (*svarūpa*).
- (c) There is one and the same *ātman* in all bodies although three levels of *ātman* are stated as: (i) the enjoyer (*bhoktr*), doer, (*kartṛ*), transmigrant soul (*saṃsārīn jīva*); (ii) the Supreme Lord, the 'maker' of the Universe, the immanent entity and (iii) the *aupaniṣad puruṣa* who is beyond mind, speech, etc. These three are respectively known as *jīva*, *īśvara* and *brahman*, but there is no real difference among the three, the apparent difference being rooted in delusion (*bhrama*).

आत्मत्वं तावन्मुख्यया वृत्त्या परमेश्वर उपपद्यते। “स आत्मा तत्त्वमसि” इति श्रुतेः ।

BrSūŚBh I.2.13

The quality of being the self, in the first place, belongs to the highest Lord in its primary (non-figurative or non-derived) sense, as we know from such texts as 'That is the Self', 'That art thou'.

(Tr. G. Thibaut)

- (d) *Ātman* is the essence of cognition (*jñānarūpa*) or pure consciousness, not the subject of cognition. The difference between the knower and the known is an impediment to infinity; hence it is not accepted. Duality is the product of ignorance (*ajñāna*). *Ātman* is another name of cognition (*jñāna*) itself.
- (e) The *ātman* is unaffected, untouched by the world (*asaṅga*).
- (f) Taking the non-Self as Self (*anātman* as *ātman*) is twofold: secondary (*gauṇa*) when the son etc. are called *ātman*, and false (*mithyā*), when one's own body is accepted as *ātman*.

तस्मात् चेतनविषय एव मुख्य आत्मशब्दश्चेतनत्वोपचाराद् भूतादिषु प्रयुज्यते
भूतात्मेन्द्रियात्मेति च ।

BrSūŚBh I.1.7

Hence (we rather assume that) the word Self in its primary meaning refers to what is intelligent only and is then by a figurative attribution of intelligence applied to the elements and the like, whence such phrases as 'the self of the elements' (*bhūtātman*), 'the self of the senses' (*indriyātman*) are formed. (Tr. G. Thibaut)

आत्मा हि नाम स्वरूपम् । न चाचेतनस्य प्रधानस्य चेतनो जीवः स्वरूपं भवितुमर्हति ।

BrSūŚBh I.1.6

By 'self' we understand (a being's) own nature, and it is clear that the intelligent *jīva* cannot constitute the nature of the non-intelligent *pradhāna* (*prakṛti*). (Tr. G. Thibaut)

The philosophy of grammar of Bhartr̥hari is rooted in the Vedic tradition, since the *R̥gveda* and the Upaniṣads contain numerous references to the universe being the form of the primal Word (*vāc*). *Ātman* has been identified with *vāc* in the philosophy of language.

अथायमान्तरो ज्ञाता सूक्ष्मे वागात्मनि स्थितः ।

व्यक्तये स्वस्य रूपस्य शब्दत्वेन विवर्तते ॥

Vāk I.112

The subtle, inner knower stays with *vāc* as its essence; it assumes transformation for the manifestation of its own form.

Here the word that is heard has been separated from the subtle *vāgātman*. The *vāc* is expounded to be the intelligence in all living beings.

सैषा संसारिणां संज्ञा बहिरन्तश्च वर्तते ।

तन्मात्रमप्यतिक्रान्तं चैतन्यं सर्वजातिषु ॥

Vāk I.126

The *vāc* is the outer and inner consciousness of those living in the world. The intelligence of living beings does not go beyond the measure of this (*vāc*).

The principle of *vāc* dwells in the living beings as inner regulator, *antaryāmin*.

अपि प्रयोक्तुरात्मानं शब्दमन्तरवस्थितम् ।
प्राहुर्महान्तमृषभं येन सायुज्यमिष्यते ॥

Vāk I.130

The *ātman* of the speaker that is the word dwelling inside, has been said to be the most excellent with whom union is desired.

एकस्यैवात्मनो भेदौ शब्दार्थावपृथक्स्थितौ ॥

Vāk II.31cd

Śabda (lit. word) and *artha* (lit. meaning) are two divisions of one and the same *ātman* and they exist in an inseparable state.

Thus *cit* (intelligence) and *vāc* are synonymous. The inner sound or word (*antaḥśabda*) is the *ātman* and the audible word and its meaning is the transformation (*vivarta*) of the same (*ātman*), hence the two (word and meaning) are identical.

The Purāṇas echo the Vedantic view and also contain passages that form the basis of Śaiva-Vaiṣṇava traditions.

अयमात्मा परं ब्रह्म सत्यं ज्ञानमनन्तकम् ॥

AgPur 160.25cd

This *ātman* is the Supreme Brahman, which is truth, knowledge and infinite. Delusion is said to be the cause of differentiation of one and the same *ātman*.

नीलपीतादिभेदेन यथैकं दृश्यते नभः ।

भ्रान्तिदृष्टिभिरात्मापि तथैकः स पृथक् पृथक् ॥

AgPur 380.65

As one and the same sky appears (different) through the difference of (colours like) blue, yellow, etc. so one and the same *ātman* is perceived differently by those having erroneous perception (vision).

In the Viṣṇu Purāṇa the fivefold form of *ātman* is described thus:

भूतात्मा चेन्द्रियात्मा च प्रधानात्मा तथा भवान् ।

आत्मा च परमात्मा च त्वमेकः पञ्चधा स्थितः ॥

ViPur V.18.50

You (O Viṣṇu), being one, exist in five forms, viz. *bhūtātman* (elemental self), *indriyātman* (senses), *pradhānātman* (*prakṛti*), *ātman* and *paramātman* (Supreme Self).

Ātman is the one that is the basis of all variety.

वेणुर्नम्रप्रभेदेन भेदः षड्जादिसंज्ञितः ।

अभेदव्यापिनो वायोस्तथास्य परमात्मनः ॥

ViPur II.14.32

Just as one and the same wind pervading non-differentiation (*abheda*), through the difference of the holes of the flute, becomes known as *ṣaḍja* etc. similarly (all the variety of) this universe (should be understood as the differentiated form) of *paramātman*.

In the *Śrīmadbhāgavata* the Lord is said to be the object of all-embracing (*sarvātmaka*) contemplation as Self (*ātmabhāva*).

अथेह धन्या भगवन्त इत्थं यद् वासुदेवेऽखिललोकनाथे ।

कुर्वन्ति सर्वात्मकमात्मभावं न यत्र भूयः परिवर्त उग्रः ॥

BhāgPur I.3.39

O Lord! blessed are those who bear universal (*sarvātmaka*) *ātmabhāva* (contemplation of self) in Vāsudeva, the Lord of all realms, where again the fierce cycle (of birth and death) does not exist.

Compounds like *akhilātman* suggesting the all pervasive nature of *ātman* find a place in the *Śrīmadbhāgavata* (cf. X.13.36).

एवंविधं त्वां सकलात्मनामपि स्वात्मानमात्मात्मतया विचक्षते ।

गुर्वकलब्धोपनिषत्सु चक्षुषा ये ते तरन्तीव भवानृताम्बुधिम् ॥

BhāgPur X.14.24

Those who, with the good eye of esoteric knowledge attained from the Sun in the form of the *guru* (preceptor) understand you, who are the own self of all *ātmans* as the *ātman* of themselves, they swim across the false ocean of becoming.

केवलात्मानुभावेन स्वमायां त्रिगुणात्मिकाम् ।

संक्षोभयन् सृजत्यादौ तया सूत्रमरिन्दम ॥

BhāgPur XI.9.19

The absolute *ātman*, stirring his *māyā* of the essence of three *guṇas*, with his prowess, initially creates the *sūtra* (*sūtrātman*), the thread of unity O subduer of enemies! (A *brāhmaṇa* is addressing the king Yadu).

The difference or plurality in *ātman* (*jīvātman*) is described to be the cause of bondage.

यावत्स्याद् गुणवैषम्यं तावन्नानात्वमात्मनः ।

नानात्वमात्मनो यावत्पारतंत्र्यं तदेव हि ॥

BhāgPur XI.10.32

As long as there is the inequality of (three) *guṇas* there is the plurality (*nānātva*) of *ātman*, and as long as there is the plurality of *ātman*, there is bondage (*pāratantrya*, lit. dependence).

Thus the unity of *ātman* is prescribed as the goal.

In Śaivism, there are two main streams, the southern or Śaiva Siddhānta tradition which is dualistic, and the Trika or Pratyabhijñā system of Kashmir. In both, there are three basic realities. In Śaiva Siddhānta these are: the Lord (*pati*), the bond (*pāśa*) and the bound soul (*paśu*). In this school the soul (*paśu*) is called *ātman* when it is liberated, but it is not considered one with the Lord. The liberated *ātman* is by nature omniscient.

In Kashmir Śaivism, Śiva is himself the *ātman* of every being, and it is he who assumes limitations (*saṅkoca*) by becoming the individual (*aṇu*, lit. atom). The third reality of Trika is *śakti*, the divine energy. *Ātman* is described in its two aspects in the *Śiva-Sūtra*, as the universal and as the individual self:

... चैतन्यपरमार्थतः शिव एव विश्वस्य आत्मा इति आदिशति —

चैतन्यमात्मा ॥

ŚSūVim I.1

(In this book, the *sūtra* at first) teaches ... that Consciousness of Śiva alone is, in the highest sense, the Self of the entire manifestation. Awareness which has absolute freedom of all knowledge and activity is the Self or nature of Reality. (Tr. J. Singh)

In the context of the limited individual, the subject of *āṇavopāya* or the 'way of the individual', *ātman* is defined as mind:

आत्मा चित्तम् ॥

ŚSū III.1

The individual Self is mind (constituted by *buddhi*, *aham*, and *manas*). (Tr. J. Singh)

In spite of the limitations which the mind imposes on the self, in reality there is no difference, as Kṣemarāja says in the commentary on the above:

न तु चिदेकरूपस्य, अस्य अतनमस्ति । अत एव चैतन्यमात्मा (१.१) इति

स्वभावभूततात्त्विकैतत्स्वरूपप्रतिपादनाशयेन पूर्वमात्मा लक्षितः । इदानीं तु एतदीयसंकोचावभासप्रधानाणवदशौचित्येन, इति न पूर्वापरवैषम्यम् ।

ŚSūVim III.1

Really speaking there is no wandering of *ātmā* which is purely consciousness. Therefore in the first sūtra of the first section, viz. *caitanyamātmā*, i.e. *ātmā* is consciousness, *ātmā* has been, at first, so defined with the intention of expounding its, inherent, essential nature. Now, however, the definition is being given mainly from the standpoint of its appearance in limitation. This definition is suitable to its condition of limitation (*āṇava daśā*). Therefore, there is no inconsistency between the previous and the later definition.

(Tr. J. Singh)

Ātman as the innermost reality of every being is thus ultimately non-different from Śiva. In the *Śiva-Sūtra* the *ātman* is also described metaphorically as a dancer or actor, which will be treated in the section on the Arts.

The Vaiṣṇava tradition will be covered under the following heads:

- (1) Pāñcarātra Āgama, (2) Vaṣṇava Upaniṣads, (3) Viśiṣṭādvaita, (4) Dvaita, (5) Dvaitādvaita, (6) Acintyabhedābheda, (7) Śuddhādvaita.

In the Pāñcarātra Āgamas *paramātman* is given the names Nārāyaṇa, Vāsudeva, etc.

योऽसौ नारायणो देवः परमात्मा सनातनः ।

AhSam VI.1ab

He who is this God Nārāyaṇa is the eternal Supreme Self.

The same text (XIV.7–10) postulates that *jīvātman* is the *aṁśa* (part) of *bhagavān*.

आत्मानो जीवसंज्ञास्ते बन्धमोक्षौ ब्रजन्ति ते ।

AhSam VI.38ab

The *ātman*s known as *jīva* attain bondage and liberation.

This *ātman* is the servitor of the Lord.

आत्मानं किङ्करत्वेन देवाय विनिवेदयेत् ।

NārSam II.85

One should offer oneself as a servant to the Lord.

The *Viśvāmitra Samhitā* (X.95) gives the name *sarvabhūtātman* to *jīvātman*. Hence nothing is devoid of *ātman*, *nirātman* and *jīvātman* is a part (*aṁśa*) of *paramātman*.

The Vaiṣṇava Upaniṣads establish *paramātman* as Nṛsiṃha, Rāma, Gopāla, Kṛṣṇa and Vāsudeva in the form of an object of worship (*upāsya*).

The Viśiṣṭādvaita of Rāmānujācārya accepts three basic principles or categories, viz. *cit* (*ātman*), *acit* (*prakṛti*) and *paramātman*. *Cit* or *ātman* is the knower (*jñātr*), not of the form of *jñāna*. Both *cit* and *acit* are adjectives and are *aṃśa* (part) of *paramātman*. All the three are eternal. *Paramātman* is the receptacle of both *bheda* (differentiation) and *abheda* (non-differentiation). He is the abode of opposite qualities (*viruddha-nānādharmāśraya*). The *cit* is *jīvātman*, generally called *ātman* who is different from body, *indriyas*, *prāṇa*, *manas* and *buddhi*; all these are its instruments, it is eternal, pervasive and different in each body; by nature it is full of happiness. The pervasiveness of *ātman* does not imply that it is *vibhu* (of great measure, *mahatparimāṇa*); rather it is atomic (*aṇurūpa*) and pervades the body and the like through *jñāna* (cognition). Thus *ātman* (*jīva*) is *saguṇa*.

In the Dvaita system of Madhvācārya *brahman* and *ātman* are synonymous; the use of the word for *jīva* is secondary; *jīva* is not *ātman* in its primary meaning. *Jīva* and *brahman* (*ātman*) are similar only on account of being *cetana* (sentient or intelligent), otherwise the two are totally different.

The school of Nimbārkācārya represents Dvaitādvaita. Here *ātman* has two forms, viz. *jīva* and Hari (Viṣṇu). *Jīvātman* is of the essence of *jñāna*, dependent on *paramātman*, capable of having *saṃyoga* (combination with) and *viyoga* (separation from) the body and thus it is plural (in each body) and atomic (*aṇurūpa*).

Brahman and *jīva* have both difference (*bheda*) and unity (*abheda*).

The Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava tradition is defined as *Acintya-bhedābheda*. Although included in the fold of Madhvācārya, this system expounds *ātman* in its own way. The primary meaning of *ātman* here also is *paramātman*, but there is the relationship of *dharmin* and *dharma* (the one who has attributes and attribute itself), *śaktimān* and *śakti* (the potent and potency), between *paramātman* and *jīvātman*, and this relationship of difference and non-difference is *acintya* (not amenable to reason). The relationship of *aṃśin* (the whole) and *aṃśa* (the part) is *acintya* as it embodies both *bheda* and *abheda*.

In Vallabhācārya's Śuddhādvaita the difference between *jīvātman* and *paramātman* is that the one is *alpajña* (the knower of the limited) and the other is *sarvajña* (omniscient), one has perfect or absolute bliss and the other has limited *ānanda*. The *jīvātman* has three features (*lakṣaṇas*); viz. (i) it is cognised through I-consciousness, is beginningless, *nirguṇa* and regulator of *prakṛti*, (ii) self-luminosity is its nature, (iii) although unaffected by the *guṇa* and *doṣa* of the universe, it is associated with the same and is eligible for liberation; by nature it

is *akriya* (non-doer), but assumes the role of the doer (*kartr*) and the *karman* (object).

Jīvas are basically divided into two categories, *śuddha* (pure) and *miśra* (mixed). The *śuddha* ones are endowed with *puṣṭi* (the *anugraha* or favour of the Lord). The *miśra* ones are twofold, viz. *pravāha-jīvas* (fallen in the current of *saṃsāra*) and *maryādā-jīvas* ordained to follow a restricted path of spiritual culture.

All the above five Vaiṣṇava systems come under the fold of Vedānta because they are based upon the Upaniṣads and each has its peculiar explanation of the **Brahma-Sūtra**. All of them agree on the point that *jīvātman* is not its own supreme regulator, it is dependent on *paramātman* and is a partial (*āṃśika*) form of *ātman* (the Supreme Being).

It is clear from the above accounts that all the systems of philosophy accept the existence of *ātman*, Buddhism stressing its negative definition. The only exception may be the Cārvāka view that there is no intelligent agent other than the aggregate of body, mind, etc.

The two major aspects that have been emphasized by different systems are: *saguṇa*, with attribute or qualities, and *nirguṇa*, devoid of attributes, beyond the reach of senses, mind, etc. Another major division is the question of the unity or plurality of *ātman*, where Vedānta and most Śaiva and Vaiṣṇava systems defined only one universal *ātman*, whereas Jainism, Āyurveda, Sāṃkhya, Yoga, Nyāya and Mīmāṃsā accept a plurality. *Ātman* has been variously associated with the idea of a doer, (*kartr*, Jaina, Mīmāṃsā), an experiencer (*bhoktr*, Sāṃkhya, Nyāya, Mīmāṃsā), a pure seer (*draṣṭṛ*, Yoga, Vedānta, Nyāya) and a knower (*jñātṛ*, Vaiśeṣika, Sāṃkhya, etc.). The Jaina and Vaiśeṣika systems have understood *ātman* to be a substance (*dravya*).

Some systems accept the existence of a Supreme Self (*paramātman*), such as the Śaiva and Vaiṣṇava, others do not, such as the Jaina, Bauddha, Sāṃkhya, Vaiśeṣika and Mīmāṃsā.

This brief survey may help in situating the various views in relation to each other.

Process of Creation

According to the non-dualistic systems of philosophy the *ātman* at the macro-level, i.e. the *paramātman* or Paramaśiva is involved in the process of creation for *līlā* or *krīḍā* (sportive action). Creation is a spontaneous movement, i.e. it has no exterior motive and the free will, *svātantrya* of the Supreme Being is not impaired

in any way in this process. But the process of manifestation itself involves limitation (*upādhi*), impurity (*mala*), veiling (*kañcuka*) or contraction (*saṅkoca*). The reverse process of withdrawal or *saṁhāra* is also of the same nature, but the order is reversed.

दिक्कालाद्यनवच्छिन्नमात्मतत्त्वं स्वशक्तिः ।

लीलयैव यदादत्ते दिक्कालकलितं वपुः ॥

LYVās sp IV.75

The reality that is *ātman*, neither limited by time nor space and the like, assumes by its own power the form limited by both time and space as a mere sport. (Tr. H.N. Chakravarty)

In spite of this assumed limitation, the *ātman* in its pervasive form (*vibhu*) shines forth in all manifest levels.

दिवि भूमौ तथाकाशे बहिरन्तश्च मे विभुः ।

यो विभात्यवभासात्मा तस्मै सर्वात्मने नमः ॥

LYVās vaip I.1

My Lord who is self-manifest light, shines in the highest heaven, in the earth, in the *ākāśa* (space) and in the 'inner' and 'outer'. I pay obeisance to him who is the Self of all (*sarvātman*).
(Tr. H.N. Chakravarty)

The limitation assumed by *ātman* in the form of individual soul or created by the *paramātman* out of his free will is associated with the element of ignorance (*ajñāna*) or *avidyā* and *māyā*, 'delusion'. The individual soul (*jīvātman*) has to re-discover itself (*ātman*) and the Supreme Lord (*paramātman*).

न शास्त्रेणापि गुरुणा दृश्यते परमेश्वरः ।

दृश्यते स्वात्मनैवात्मा स्वया सत्त्वस्थया धिया ॥

LYVās np XIII.30

Neither by (the help of the) sacred texts, nor by the (help of the) spiritual guide, can the Supreme Lord be seen. The Self is realised only by one's own self with the help of pure intellect.
(Tr. H.N. Chakravarty)

At the micro level the process of creation or manifestation is re-enacted in the arts. The principle to be manifested or in other words the *ātman* to be embodied and the process of embodiment or manifestation is briefly discussed in the next section.

Manifestation in the Arts

In the arts too, body and soul are mutually complementary and hence *ātman* is sometimes suggested through a reference to the body (*śarīra*). The concept of body is incomplete without that of *ātman*, because when a 'being' or 'creation' is conceptualised as body, the conceptualisation presupposes an *ātman* or inner principle. A body without *ātman* would be like a house without a dweller and similarly, a soul without a body would be without a 'form' which is essential in art.

The *Nāṭya-Śāstra* (XIX.1) refers to *itivr̥tta* (plot) as the body of drama. Elsewhere (XIV.2) it mentions *vāc* (text and its rendering through dialogue, recitation) as the body of drama. Both these references suggest that there is an *ātman* that regulates the body. Abhinavagupta says in his commentary on the *Nāṭya-Śāstra*.

रसाः पुनरात्मा शरीराविर्भावकाः ।

AbhiBhā on NŚ XIX.1

Rasas constitute the *ātman* because they manifest the body.

This implies that the body of drama in the form of plot is regulated by *rasa*, i.e. the plot is shaped according to the *rasa* that it is required to manifest.

Apart from the implicit pair of *ātman* and *śarīra*, the word *adhyātma* and compounds like *ātmastha*, *parastha*, *ātmagata*, etc. are used in various contexts in the *Nāṭya-Śāstra*.

Adhyātma is accepted as one of the three means of valid knowledge (*pramāṇa*) in drama, the other two being *loka* and *Veda*.

लोको वेदस्तथाध्यात्मं प्रमाणं त्रिविधं स्मृतम् ।

वेदाध्यात्मपदार्थेषु प्रायो नाट्यं प्रतिष्ठितम् ॥

NŚ XXV.120

'*Loka*' (human life and experience in general), '*Veda*' (formulated knowledge, *śāstra*) and *adhyātma* (experience in or of the self), this is the threefold *pramāṇa* (means of valid knowledge) (in drama). *Nāṭya* (drama) is generally established in the things or categories of *Veda* and *adhyātma*.

अध्यात्मं तु संस्थं (स्वसं) वेदनम् ।

AbhiBhā on NŚ XXV.120

Adhyātma means self-experience.

In the types of *abhinaya*, 'self' (*ātman*) and 'other' (*para*) have formed the basis of two out of seven (types).

प्रत्यक्षश्च परोक्षश्च तथा कालकृतास्त्रयः ।

आत्मस्थश्च परस्थश्च प्रकाराः सप्त एव तु ॥

NŚ XXII.61

There are seven kinds of (*abhinaya*, acting in drama), viz. direct, indirect, three (kinds) made up of time (present, past and future), *ātmastha* (in one's self) and *parastha* (in the other).

Ātmastha and *parastha* have been explained as being related to one's own experience and to the other's experience respectively.

आत्मानुभावी योऽर्थः स्यादात्मस्थ इति स स्मृतः ।

परार्थवर्णना यत्र परस्थः स तु संज्ञितः ॥

आत्मनि सुखादयोऽर्थाः समवायिन इति सर्व एव ते आत्मस्थाः स्युः, रूपादीनां चान्यत्र समवायात् सदैव परस्थता स्यादित्याशङ्क्याह आत्मानुभावी योऽर्थः स्यादिति । परशब्दसन्निधानादात्मशब्दोऽत्राहंभावास्पदे प्रत्यगात्मनि वर्तते । तमात्मानमनुभावयति यदार्थः स आत्मस्थः । रूपादयोऽपि चैवं भवन्तीति कथं नात्मस्थाः, परसुखादयश्च नैवमिति कथमात्मस्थाः ।

NŚ with AbhiBhā XXII.94

That thing or object which brings about the experience of self, is known as *ātmastha*. Where there is the description of things of others that is called *parastha*.

In order to meet the contention that feelings of pleasure and the like are always inherent in the self and objects like form or beauty and the like are always inherent in the other and that hence the former should always be *ātmastha* (seated in the self) and the latter should always be *parastha* (seated in the other), the definition of *ātmastha* and *parastha* is being given. Because the word *para* is in proximity, the word *ātman* stands for the *pratyagātman* (the individual soul) which is the seat of I-consciousness. When the *artha* (content of *abhinaya*, acting in drama) brings about an experience of that *ātman* (in the audience), then it is *ātmastha*; objects like form or beauty and the like are also of this kind and hence why should they not be *ātmastha*, and the pleasure and the like of others are not so and hence why should they be *ātmastha*?

Soliloquy in drama is called the speech seated in the *ātman* (*ātmagata pāṭhya*).

हृदयस्य वचो यत्तु तदात्मगतमिष्यते ॥

NŚ XXV.88cd

The speech which belongs to the heart is accepted as *ātmagata* (seated in *ātman*).

Oneself (*ātman*) and the other (*para*) are also the basis of two types of humour (*hāsya*) in the *Nāṭya-Śāstra*.

द्विविधश्चायमात्मस्थः परस्थश्च । यदा स्वयं हसति तदाऽऽत्मस्थः । यदा तु परं हासयति तदा परस्थः ।

NS VI, p. 313

This (*hāsya rasa*) is two fold, viz. *ātmastha* and *parastha*. When one laughs by oneself, it is *ātmastha* and when one makes another (person) laugh, it is *parastha*.

Apart from the above passages of the *Nāṭya-Śāstra*, the following two sūtras of the *Śiva-Sūtra* are pertinent here, as they describe *ātman* (self) as the dancer or actor and the "inner soul of the subtle form" (*antarātman*) as the stage (*raṅga*) on which the dance or drama is performed. The concept of the Self enacting a dance or drama and the 'inner soul' or *jīva* as distinct from the outer body, representing the stage (*raṅga*) is at once related to the philosophy of drama as well as to the cosmic view of the Self. Hence this exposition is relevant to the arts; it could shed light on the concept of 'reality' in art as well as be of help in understanding artistic activity in its correspondence with the world-view.

नर्तक आत्मा ॥ रङ्गोऽन्तरात्मा ॥

ŚSū III.9-10

Ātman is the dancer or actor. *Antarātman* is the stage (*raṅga*).

Kṣemarāja explains that *antarātman* is the *jīva* who assumes a body and who is 'inner' in relation to the body, it is of the essence of contraction and manifestation, its main constituent being either the void (*śūnya*) or vital air (*prāṇa*).

The inner soul (*antarātman*) is the stage where the *ātman* dances or acts in the different states of consciousness like wakefulness (*jāgrat*), dream (*svapna*) and deep sleep (*suṣupti*).

In *Kāvya* (literature) *ātman* has been referred to specifically in two famous passages.

रीतिरात्मा काव्यस्य । रीतिर्नामायमात्मा काव्यस्य । शरीरस्येवेति वाक्यशेषः ।

Kāvyālsū II.6

The soul of *kāvya* (poetry or literature) is *rīti* (style), this statement has to be supplemented with the explanation that *rīti* is the soul of the body of *kāvya* (poetry).

The commentator (Tripuraharabhūpāla) on the above says that the 'body' has to be supplemented in order to complete the implication of *ātman*, because

the latter cannot be 'limited' or demarcated without the body. The second passage relates to *dhvani*.

काव्यस्यात्मा ध्वनिरिति ... ।

DhvĀl I.1

Dhvani (suggestion) is the soul of poetry.

It regulates the choice of words both in view of their sound and meaning, *alaṅkāra*, *rīti* (style), etc. and the central point in *dhvani* is →*rasa*.

Rasa is called *aṅgin* and it is said to be similar to *ātman*.

ये रसस्याङ्गिनो धर्माः शौर्यादय इवात्मनः ।

KāPrak VIII.1ab

Guṇas (lit. qualities) are the attributes of *rasa*. Just as valour, etc. are the qualities of *ātman* (and not of the body).

The body of *kāvya* (poetry) is made of syllables (phonemes), but the *guṇas* are not accepted to pertain to them, rather they pertain to *rasa* which is the *aṅgin* just as valour etc. do not belong to the body but to *ātman*. A man with a big-built body could be devoid of valour and a small-made man could be valorous. But just as sometimes it is said "the appearance of this man itself is valorous", or small appearance is erroneously identified with lack of valour, similarly sometimes the syllabic structure of poetry itself is related to *guṇas* like *mādhurya* (sweetness), *ojas* (vigour) and *prasāda* (clarity).

The content of poetry is called *abhidheyātman* by Kuntaka.

प्रतिप्रकरणं प्रौढप्रतिभाभोगयोजितः ।

एक एवाभिधेयात्मा बध्यमानः पुनः पुनः ॥

VaJi IV.7

Even one and the same theme is again and again described in different places with a new touch of creative originality.

(Tr. K. Krishnamoorti)

The simile of one and the same *ātman* taking different bodies could be said to be inherent here.

In music, *ātman* and *śarīra* (body) would appear to be so intertwined that the two have not been referred to separately. *Gāndharva* (music) is made of *svara* (tone and melody), *tāla* (tempo and cyclic rhythm) and *pada* (syllabic structure, meaningful or meaningless). In a way these three together could be said to stand for the body of music; but its *ātman* has nowhere been referred to separately. In the concept of *nāda* the separation of word and meaning does not exist. It stands for total experience of sound in its composite state where pitch, loudness, timbre

and duration are a unified whole, where the 'inner' and the 'outer' are not separated. Even so, *rasa* is the regulating factor in the music forming part of drama. In the music independent of drama, the autonomy of music is established and there, instead of *rasa*, the continuum of the aesthetic impact is described through two key-words, viz. *uddhata* (strong, fierce or violent) and *sukumāra* (delicate, tender) which do not represent polarisation, but two facets of one aesthetic reality, like *agni* (fire) and *soma* (moon) which appear to be opposites, but are really mutually complementary.

Ātman is the seat of will or volition for sound-production in the human body. The **Pāṇiniya Śikṣā** (6-9) mentions *ātman* as the prime agent in the process of sound-production in the human body. The **Saṅgīta-Ratnākara** (I.3.3-4) follows it. But the **Brhaddeśi** (I.1) mentions *puruṣa* in this context and hence this text does not mention *manas* (mind) and *buddhi*, whereas, the **Pāṇiniya Śikṣā** mentions both *buddhi* (intellect) and *manas* (mind) and the **Saṅgīta-Ratnākara** mentions only *manas*.

In architecture (*vāstu*) and sculpture (*śilpa*), the point (*bindu*) is identified as *ātman*.

वृत्तस्य गतिरवधारिता, यथा चित्तवृत्तिः । वृत्तस्याधारोऽमृतं बिन्दुस्तस्य स्थितिः,
यथाऽऽत्मा ।

Comm. on VSUp II.6

The movement of the circle is restricted (by its circumference), like the fluctuation of the mind. The support of the circle is the immortal, the *bindu* is its firm position (station) like the *Ātman* (in man).

(Based on the tr. by A. Boner and B. Bäumer)

The temple is the body or abode of God and the *garbhagrha* (womb-house) is like the *hṛdaya-guhā* (heart-cave), the dwelling of the *ātman*. The *pratimā* (image) installed in the *garbhagrha* is again consecrated with a ritual of *prāṇapratīṣṭhā* (installation of *prāṇa* or life) implying that *ātman* is 'entering' the body. A cyclic process by way of the 'structure' of the body being formed on the basis of *bindu*, the *ātman* and the body thus created being again occupied by the *ātman* is implied.

So far as the process of manifestation is concerned, the following passage of the **Nāṭya-Śāstra** is relevant.

यथा बीजाद् भवेद् वृक्षो वृक्षात् पुष्पं फलं तथा ।

तथा मूलं रसाः सर्वे ... ॥

तदेवं मूलं बीजस्थानीयः कविगतो रसः । ... ततो वृक्षस्थानीयं काव्यम् । तत्र पुष्पादिस्थानीयोऽभिनयादि

नटव्यापारः । तत्र फलस्थानीयः सामाजिकरसास्वादः । तेन रसमयमेव विश्वम् ।

NŚ with AbhiBhā VI.38

Just as the tree is (born) from the seed and from the tree (grows) the flower and the fruit, similarly all *rasas* are the root (in drama or any art).

Thus the root is the *rasa* experienced by the *kavi* (lit. poet, but creator in any art, responsible for the primary process of 'imagination'). The poetry (text of drama) is the tree. The flowers are the function of the 'actor' who performs *abhinaya* and the like. The fruit is the experience of *rasa* by the *sāmājika* (aesthete). Hence the whole universe (of art) is made of *rasa*.

Conclusion

The deep experience of the creator is the 'seed' or 'point' in artistic creation. Obviously this is the unmanifest *ātman* which has to assume a 'body' in order to be manifest and be accessible to the spectator and listener. This process of manifestation involves the use of word and meaning in literature, *svara* (melody), *tāla* (rhythm) and *pada* (text) in music text, acting (*abhinaya*) etc. in drama; stone, wood, brick, mortar etc. in architecture (including sculpture) and line and colour in painting. Just as the fruit again produces the seed, similarly the experience of *rasa* by the aesthete, being the fruit, enables him to realise the state of seed. This completes the cycle of creation and withdrawal (*saṃhāra*); from *ātman* back to *ātman*, with the intermediary process of embodiment. Just as the *ātman* at the micro-level has to be realised through pure intellect, similarly, *rasa*, the *ātman* of art has to be realised with a purified mind. But there is one difference in the two processes. In the realisation of *ātman*, the gross body made of the five elements is negated in the sense that it is not *ātman*, i.e. the identification of the *ātman* with the body is denied, as in the following passage ascribed to Śaṅkarācārya:

प्रातः स्मरामि हृदि संस्फुरदात्मतत्त्वं सच्चित्सुखं परमहंसगतिं तुरीयम् ।

यत्स्वप्नजागरसुषुप्तमवैति नित्यं तद् ब्रह्म निष्कलमहं न च भूतसङ्गः ॥

Prātaḥsmaraṇam 1

In the morning I remember the *ātma-tattva* (the principle known as *ātman*) that sparkles or throbs in my heart, that is (made of) *sat* (existence), *cit* (intelligence) and *sukha* (bliss) that is the fourth (beyond the three states of consciousness; viz. wakefulness, dream and deep sleep), that is accessible to *parama-haṃsas* (liberated ones), that is present in dream, wakefulness, and slumber and is eternal. I am that undifferentiated *brahman* and not the aggregate of elements.

This negation of the identification of *ātman* with body is not relevant in the arts. Here the *ātman* (*rasa*) has to be realised through the body of the art, which itself represents a process of transformation of the ingredients from life (*loka*) both at the gross and subtle levels.

Thus the vast expanse of extensive and intensive thought on *ātman* in the Indian tradition is directly and indirectly reflected in the thought on the arts as well as in their practice. The identification of the *ātman* with the body which is the first near and dear one and the negation of the body as *ātman*, both these viewpoints find a place in the arts. Body and soul are mutually inseparable and yet the goal is the realisation of *rasa*, the soul of art, the body being like a threshold leading to the experience of *rasa*.

Prem Lata Sharma

Select Bibliography

See after *Śaṅkara*.

ŚARĪRA

Overview

The word *śarīra* (mn.), 'body' in all its connotations, with its synonyms, cognates and metaphorical usage is deeply rooted in the Indian tradition. The body has been viewed since times immemorial as an 'abode' or instrument of the → *ātman* and hence pairs like *śarīrin*, *deha-dehin*, *kṣetra-kṣetrajña*, *aṅga-aṅgin*, *pura-puruṣa* are well-known. Metaphors of the house and the house-holder, the castle or city and the king, the chariot and the rider, the cage and the bird, the 'sheet' (*cādar*) and the weaver, the scarf and the bride, etc. are very much alive both in the written and oral traditions even today.

At the micro-level the *jīva* or individuated soul assumes a body by 'entering' the 'seed' (→ *bīja*) and thus the body is not born of a mechanical process.

As an instrument, the body serves as an expansion of the Supreme Soul in the process of creation at the cosmic level and for the individual soul it serves the purpose of *bhoga* (experience of pleasure and pain) which is tied up with *karman* in a cyclic manner.

All the exponents of the different systems of philosophy, all mystics and all masters of disciplines related to arts and sciences have contributed to the thought about the body which is sometimes looked upon as a bondage, at other times a means of liberation, sometimes analysed at the gross level, at other times at the subtle level and even beyond that. Though mortal, it can lead to the attainment of divinity; it has various levels from the lowest to the highest and it is inseparably paired with the *ātman*. It covers a wide expanse, from the smallest worm to the highest manifestation of divinity. It is both a means and an end and dominates all levels and areas of Indian thought.

Etymology and Related Words

Śarīra is derived from the root *śr-* meaning to crush, bend, break, destroy; in the passive voice *śīryate*. Kṣīrasvāmin explains the term as *śīryate iti śarīram*, 'That which decays and gets destroyed is *śarīra*' (comm. on AmKo II.6.70).

The primary meaning would, therefore, be associated with decay and death. However, Yāska has given the etymology of *śarīra* from another outlook:

शरीरं शृणातेः शम्रातेर्वा ।

Śarīra (body) is derived from (the root) *śr-* 'to burn' or from *śam-* 'to destroy'. (Tr. L. Sarup)

In the **Garbhopaniṣad** the word is explained in the following way:

शरीरमिति कस्मात् ? साक्षादग्रयो ह्यत्र श्रियन्ते ज्ञानाग्निर्दर्शनाग्निः कोष्ठाग्निरिति ।

GarbhUp 5

Why is he (embryo) called 'the body' (*śarīram*)? Because in it lie (*śriyante*) close fires, namely the fire of knowledge, the fire of seeing and the gastric fire. (Tr. V.M. Bedekar & G.B. Palsule)

The synonyms of *śarīra* as enumerated in the **Amara Kośa** (II.6.70–71ab) are as follows:

Kalevara, gātra, vāṇu, saṃhanana, varṣman, vighraha, kāya, deha, mūrti, tanu and *tanū*.

The following four are also well-known synonyms or metaphorical identifications: *kṣetra, aṅga, pur-pura-purī, piṇḍa*, and *rūpa*.

Although all these words convey the meaning of body, they have subtle shades of meaning by virtue of etymology and conventional usage. The etymology is being taken up first on the basis of Kṛṣṇamitra's commentary on the **Amara Kośa** and the Sanskrit-English Dictionaries of Monier-Williams and V.S. Apte:

- (i) *Deha* is derived from the root *dih-* meaning to anoint, smear, plaster, and accumulate make dirty. This etymology would suggest that *deha* is like a plaster or envelope on the *ātman* or that it is associated with impurity or dirt.

कलङ्को देह उच्यते ।

SvT VII.228b

Impurity is said to be the body. (Tr. H.N. Chakravarty)

Kṣemarāja, commenting on the above says:

यथायं स्थूलस्तत्त्वादिरूपो देहः कलङ्कः, तथा करणाश्रयः प्राणात्मा सूक्ष्मः, समनान्त-
प्रमातृ-प्रमेयरूपः परोऽपि देहः कलङ्क एव ।

As this body made of gross categories like earth and others is impure, similarly the subtle one which is of the nature of the vital energy and the very support of the instrument of knowledge is impure, and even the supreme body up to *samanā* as the subject and the object, is nothing but impurity. (Tr. H.N. Chakravarty)

The **Maitrī Upaniṣad** (II.4–6) also speaks of the impurities of *deha*.

The excretions of the body are known as *malas* and hence the body is known to be a repository of impurities. In the *Saṅgīta-Ratnākara* (cf. SRI.2.162cd) *deha* has been described as being *mala sañcaya saṃvṛta*, i.e. a heap of filth surrounded by impurities.

- (ii) *Tanu* or *tanū* – derived from the root *tan-* to protract, extend, spread, spin out; meaning thin, slender, delicate in addition to body. The process of extension or spreading out from the seed or semen in the formation of body as well as the subtle process of birth, growth, decay and death could be implied in this etymology.
- (iii) *Aṅga* – meaning both the body and a limb of the body, is derived from the root *am-* meaning to go to or towards and *ag-* to go or move. Thus the word implies a structure where the whole and parts are involved and the etymology hints at movement which also is in consonance with the idea of a structure.
- (iv) *Kṣetra* – derived from the root *kṣi-* meaning to dwell, to destroy, ruin, decrease, perish. The primary meaning of the word is field or soil. The body is called *kṣetra*, as the ‘field of the indwelling soul’ (Monier-Williams). The association of field or soil seems to suggest the cyclic process of sowing a seed and again obtaining seeds from the crop; this is a biological phenomenon.
- (v) *Piṇḍa* – derived from the root *piṇḍ-* meaning to make a lump after gathering; to join, unite, assemble. The word is used both for the body and for the embryo in the initial stage, when the limbs are not yet formed. As distinct from *aṅga* which suggests structure, *piṇḍa* would seem to suggest a mass formed out of an assemblage of various elements.
- (vi) *Gātra* – derived from the root *gai-* to dig, means both the body and its limb(s).
- (vii) *Kāya* – derived from the root *ci-* meaning to arrange in order, pile up, heap up, construct, collect, accumulate. Here also the idea of structure is implicit.
- (viii) *Pur-pura-puri* (lit. city or fort) – derived from the root *pr-* which occurs in five *gaṇas* (series of roots), viz. *tudādi*, *juhotyādi*, *kṛyādi*, *curādi* and *svādi*; in the *juhotyādi* series it means to rescue, save, protect and in the *curādi* series it means to fill. Both these meanings seem to be relevant in the case of *pura* (city or fort) which saves or protects its inhabitants and in turn fills space. The body is called *pur* because of being the habitat of the *ātman* and because of filling space. This word also implies structure.

अष्टाचक्रा नवद्वारा देवानां पूरयोध्या ।

Ayodhyā (the unassailable one) having eight *cakras* (cycles, psycho-physical centres) and nine doors (openings, viz. the two ears, two eyes, two nostrils, mouth, anus and generative organ), is the city of gods.

- (ix) *Vapus* – derived from the root *vap-* meaning to sow, plant, throw or heap up, to procreate, beget. There is an association of beautiful form or lustre with body in this word.
- (x) *Samhanana* – derived from the root *han-* meaning to kill, destroy, multiply. Multiplication could be relevant in the context of the body.
- (xi) *Varṣman* – derived from the root *vr̥ṣa-* meaning to rain, shower, procreate, strike, etc. The association of beauty of form is present also in this word standing for the body.
- (xii) *Vigraha* – derived from the root *grah-* to take up, acquire; this word stands for extension, form and body.
- (xiii) *Mūrti* – derived from the root *murch-* or *mūr̥ch-* meaning to become solid, to assume shape, grow, become strong. Thus the idea of solidification or assumption of form is conveyed.
- (xiv) *Kalevara* – has been explained or interpreted as '*kale varam*', i.e. that which is the best in *kala*. The well known meaning of *kala*, viz. pleasant or indistinct sound does not seem to be pertinent, the other meaning is semen. The association of this meaning in the context of body is not, however, clear.

The conventional usage of the above words is very interesting. Although it is difficult to assign definite reasons for the specific usage of these words, it would be of interest to note the specific contexts associated with most of these words. Their inter-changeability cannot, however, be ruled out.

Layers of Meaning

The core meaning of *śarīra* could be understood in mainly five dimensions or layers as follows:

1. At the functional level it is organic, i.e. it has a structure.
2. At the conceptual level, it is the abode of *ātman* (*śarīra*), i.e. it is not *cetana* (sentient) by itself.
3. In the time-dimension, it is transient or ephemeral.

4. Speaking of its composition, it is made up of the five elements (*bhūtas*) and is associated with impurity.
5. It is an instrument of *ātman*.

Thus *śarīra* is organic or structural, it is dependent on sentient or intelligent principle and is an instrument, is transient, is composed of *bhūtas* (elements) and is impure.

The above is surely a general view of *śarīra* but it could not be said to represent the totality. At another level the *śarīra* is understood to be transcendental or divine, it is made of the intelligent principle itself, is eternal, pure and not made up of the *bhūtas* (elements). Of course, this *śarīra* is either a 'descent' (*avatāra*) of the divine or it is attained by the *jīvātman* (individual soul) through spiritual culture (*sādhana*), in both cases the distinction of *śarīra* and *ātman* does not exist.

Thus the concept of *śarīra* has two aspects at each level or dimension, as follows:

Dimension	Two aspects
Reality	real/unreal <i>sat-asat</i>
Time	eternal/transient <i>nitya-anitya</i>
Composition	subtle/gross <i>sūkṣma-sthūla</i>
Divinity	divine/earthly <i>divya-pārthiva</i>
Genesis	born from/not born from the womb <i>yonija/ayonija</i>
Purity	pure/impure <i>śuddha-aśuddha</i>

In some of the dimensions mentioned above, there are more than two aspects or types, e.g. *sūkṣma*, *sthūla*, and *para* or *kāraṇa* are the three types.

Development of the Concept

In the *R̥gveda* *śarīra* is used for body in general, seven times. *Vapus* is used more frequently (51 times) and Sāyaṇa has explained this word as *prakāśātmaka rūpa* (lustrous form) (cf. RV I. 102.2) or as just form (cf. RV I.1.8). The word *deha* has not been directly used; its derivative *dehya* occurs twice (RV VI.47.2 and VII.6.5). Besides other synonyms *aṅga* is used five times for a part of the body or of *yajña* (cf. Sāyaṇa on RV X.109.5). *Tanu* is used eight times and is sometimes interpreted by Sāyaṇa as body (cf. RV IV.10.6). *Tānukṛt* (RV I.31.9) is interpreted

as the maker of the body in the form of the son and in plural number, *tanu* is used forty four times for limbs of the body.

Apart from the general meaning of *śarīra*, viz. body and sometimes its parts in plural number (cf. RV VI.25.4, X.16.3 for the latter) in the context of divine entities like Indra, Savitr, Agni, Vāyu, etc. the **Rgveda** contains two notable references to *śarīra* as follows.

The inspired ascetics (*keśī*, *muni*) are addressing the ordinary mortals:

उन्मदिता मौनेयेन वाताँ आ तस्थिमा वयम् ।

शरीरेदस्माकं यूयं मर्तासो अभि पश्यथ ॥

RV X.136.3

Intoxicated, they say, by our austerities,

we have taken the winds for our steeds.

You ordinary mortals here below

see nothing except our bodies. (Tr. R. Panikkar)

A similar passage is found in the Khilasūktas of the **Rgveda** (*śarīraṃ me vicakṣaṇaṃ vāñ me madhumad duhām*—X.151.5ab) and in the **Taittirīya Upaniṣad**:

शरीरं मे विचर्षणम् । जिह्वा मे मधुमत्तमा । कर्णाभ्यां भूरि विश्रुवम् ।

TUp I.4.1

My body is *vicakṣaṇa* (conspicuous, visible, bright, sagacious) or *vicarṣaṇa* (endowed with a multifarious vision), my speech or tongue is full of honey, I have heard abundantly with my two ears.

The above two passages from the **Rgveda** and **Taittirīya Upaniṣad** refer to the body as an efficient instrument of 'vision' or as a sagacious instrument. The 'golden hand' of Savitr and numerous similar references could be construed to represent the 'divinity' of the body of divine manifestations such as Indra, Savitr, Vāyu, etc.

Thus the **Rgveda** uses the word *śarīra* in general, *vapus* with the association of lustre and beauty of the body, *varṣman* in the sense of accumulation or aggregation and strength, *aṅga* for parts and *tanu* both for parts and the whole.

The **Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa** speaks of *śarīra* as the repository of 'everything'.

अथ यत् सर्वमस्मिन्नश्रयन्त तस्मादु शरीरम् ।

ŚBr VI.1.1.4

The *śarīra* is known as such because everything (mind, speech, vital force, organs, etc.) rests in it.

The Upaniṣads generally use the word *śarīra* for the body. Here *śarīra* is associated with mortality and the *ātman* is sometimes described as *aśarīra* or bodiless.

... मर्त्यं वा इदं शरीरमात्तं मृत्युना, तदस्यामृतस्याशरीरस्यात्मनोऽधिष्ठानम् ।

ChUp VIII.12.1

This mortal body is taken away by death, that (body) is the seat of the immortal *ātman* which is without a body.

The mortal or transient nature of *śarīra* is thus described:

भस्मान्तं शरीरम् ।

ĪśUp 17b

The body has its end in ashes.

The earthly nature of the body is thus spoken of:

अस्य पुरुषस्य मृतस्याग्निं वागप्येति, वातं प्राणश्चक्षुरादित्यं, मनश्चन्द्रं, दिशः श्रोत्रं, पृथिवीं शरीरम् ... ।

BrUp III.2.13

The speech of the dead man returns to the fire, his breath (returns) to air, his eyes to the sun, his mind to the moon, his ears to the directions (of space) and his body to the earth...

The earthly structure inhabited by →*prāṇa* (vital force) is the body; both are inter-dependent:

प्राणे शरीरं प्रतिष्ठितं, शरीरे प्राणः प्रतिष्ठितः ।

TUp III.7

The body rests in *prāṇa* and the *prāṇa* is seated in the body.

Śarīra has been said to be *yajña* (act of worship or sacrifice), impure (*śamala*) and a loan on interest (*kuśīda*) in one and the same passage.

शरीरं यज्ञः शमलं कुसीदं तस्मिन् सीदतु योऽस्मान् द्वेष्टि ॥

MNUp XX.12

The body is a *yajña* (instrument of worship, or involving the process of sacrifice in its birth and death), it is a seat of impurity, it is *kuśīda* (a loan of interest). He who bears enmity to us may perish in this (body).

Another passage is relevant to the association of *yajña* (sacrifice) with the body and also in the concept of the body as an instrument of expansion.

सोऽकामयत - भूयसा यज्ञेन भूयो यजेयेति । सोऽश्राम्यत् । स तपोऽतप्यत । तस्य श्रान्तस्य तप्तस्य यशो वीर्यमुदक्रामत् । प्राणा वै यशो वीर्यम् । तत् प्राणेषूत्क्रान्तेषु शरीरं श्वयितुमध्रियत । तस्य शरीर एव मन आसीत् ।

BrUp I.2.6

He desired: 'Let me sacrifice further with a greater sacrifice (*yajña*)!' He tortured himself. He practised austerity. When he had tortured himself and practised austerity, glory and vigor went forth. The glory and vigor, verily, are the vital breaths. So when the vital breaths departed, his body began to swell. His mind, indeed, was in his body (*śarīra*). (Tr. R.E. Hume)

The most famous metaphor for the body is that of the chariot (*ratha*):

आत्मानं रथिनं विद्धि शरीरं रथमेव तु ।
बुद्धिं तु सारथिं विद्धि मनः प्रग्रहमेव च ॥

KathUp III.3

Know thou the soul (*ātman*, self) as riding in a chariot,
The body as the chariot.
Know thou the intellect (*buddhi*) as the chariot-driver,
And the mind (*manas*) as the reins. (Tr. R.E. Hume)

In another metaphor the body is the bow, the instrument for aiming at the highest goal:

धनुः शरीरम् । ओमित्येतच्छरः । शिखास्य मनस्तमोलक्ष्यं भित्त्वा तमोऽतमाविष्टम्
आगच्छति । अथाविष्टं भित्त्वाऽलातचक्रमिव स्फुरन्तमादित्यवर्णमूर्जस्वन्तं ब्रह्म तमसः
पर्यमपश्यत् ।

MaitUp VI.24

The body is a bow. The arrow is *Om*. The mind is its point. Darkness is the mark. Having pierced through the darkness, one goes to what is not enveloped in darkness. Then, having pierced through what is enveloped, one sees Him who sparkles like a wheel of fire, of the color of the sun, mighty, the Brahma that is beyond darkness. (Tr. R.E. Hume)

The same simile is found in the **Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad** (II.2.4).

That the body is a 'veil' or 'envelope' of the soul, the *ātman*, the intelligent principle which acquires manifestation through the body, is the purport of the following passage.

नैव स्त्री न पुमानेष न चैवायं नपुंसकः ।
यद्यच्छरीरमादत्ते तेन तेन स युज्यते ॥

ŚvUp V.10

Not female, nor yet male is it;
Nor yet is this neuter.
Whatever body he takes to himself,
With that he becomes connected. (Tr. R.E. Hume)

Thus the *śarīra* has to be 'acquired' by the sentient or intelligent principle, it is not born or formed out of a mechanical process, but all the same, the *ātman* has to be realised as being beyond or without the corporeal body (*aśarīra*).

यो ह वै तदच्छायमशरीरमलोहितं शुभ्रमक्षरं । वेदयते यस्तु सौम्य । स सर्वज्ञः सर्वो
भवति ।

PrUp IV.10

He who recognizes that shadowless, bodiless, bloodless, pure
Imperishable, arrives at the Imperishable itself. He, knowing all,
becomes the All. (Tr. R.E. Hume)

The Upaniṣads do not limit the idea of the body to the microcosm, the macrocosm is corresponding to it. Thus the three constituents of *ātman*, speech, mind and breath have their cosmic body as earth, sky and water.

तस्यै वाचः पृथिवी शरीरं ज्योतीरूपमयमग्निस्तद्यावत्येव वाक् तावती पृथिवी तावानयम्
अग्निः । अथैतस्य मनसो द्यौः शरीरं ज्योतीरूपमसावादित्यस्तद्यावदेव मनस्तावती
द्यौस्तावानसावादित्यः ... । अथैतस्य प्राणस्यापः शरीरं ज्योतीरूपमसौ चन्द्रस्तद्यावानेव
प्राणस्तावत्य आपस्तावानसौ चन्द्रस्त एते सर्व एव समाः सर्वेऽनन्ताः ... ।

BrUp I.5.11-13

Of this Speech the earth is the body. Its light-form is this (terrestrial)
fire. As far as Speech extends, so far extends the earth, so far this fire.
Likewise of that Mind the sky is the body. Its light-form is yon sun.
As far as Mind extends, so far extends the sky, so far yon sun.
Likewise of that Breath, water is the body. Its light-form is yon moon.
As far as breath extends, so far extends water, so far yon moon. These
are all alike, all infinite. (Tr. R.E. Hume)

The macrocosmic forms are infinite in comparison to the finite microcosmic body. The metaphor of city found in the *Atharvaveda* is echoed in the *dehagṛha* of a later Upaniṣad, viz. the **Mahopaniṣad**:

नास्ति देहसमः शोच्यो नीचो गुणविवर्जितः ॥
कलेवरमहंकारगृहस्थस्य महागृहम् ।

पंक्तिबद्धेन्द्रियपशुं बलात्तृष्णागृहाङ्गणम् ।
 चित्तभृत्यजनाकीर्णं नेष्टुं देहगृहं मम ॥
 रक्तमांसमयस्यास्य सबाह्याभ्यन्तरे मुने ।
 नाशैकधर्मिणो ब्रूहि कैव कायस्य रम्यता ॥
 तडित्सु शरदभ्रेषु गन्धर्वनगरेषु च ।
 स्थैर्यं येन विनिर्णीतं स विश्वसितु विग्रहे ॥

MahāUp III.27, 28ab, 29, 31-32

There is nothing as deplorable, lowly (and) devoid of qualities as the body. The *kalevara* (body) is the big house of *ahaṅkāra* (ego), the householder. This *dehagrha* in which *indriyas* (sensory and motor organs) are tied up in a row, where desire is leaping or dancing in the courtyard (and) which is crowded with the servants of the mind, is not coveted by me. This body is made of blood and flesh 'within' and 'without' (and) destruction is its only nature; tell me, what is the beauty of this (body)? He who sees steadiness in lightning, in the clouds of autumn or in the cities of *gandharvas*, he should have confidence in this body (*vigraha*, form).

The above passages from Vedic Literature bear testimony to the fact that the body has been described at two levels, viz. the outer 'veil' or 'envelope' of the *ātman* at the micro-level and the 'extension' or 'expansion' at the macro level (→*puruṣa*). Mortality, unreality, impurity, etc. are associated with the body only at the micro-level.

The **Bhagavad-Gītā** uses the word *śarīra* (II.20, 22) where the imperishable nature of *ātman* (soul) as distinct from the body as perishable has been described. But besides the human body, which is also called *kṣetra*, 'field' (XIII), or *kāya* (cf. V.11, VI.13, XVIII.8), the **Gītā** refers to the divine body assumed by the Lord (→*avatāra*). By taking on a human body, he accepts the limitations of birth and action:

जन्म कर्म च मे दिव्यमेवं यो वेत्ति तत्त्वतः ।
 त्यक्त्वा देहं पुनर्जन्म नैति मामेति सोऽर्जुन ॥

BhG IV.9

He who thus knoweth my divine birth and action, in its essence, having abandoned the body, cometh not to birth again, but cometh unto Me, O Arjuna. (Tr. A. Besant and B. Das)

Yet, the body of the Lord transcends all human dimensions, as He reveals Himself to Arjuna in His *viśvarūpa* form (BhG XI).

The whole cosmos is to be seen in one body.

इहैकस्थं जगत्कृत्स्नं पश्याद्य सचराचरम् ।
मम देहे गुडाकेश यच्चान्यद् द्रष्टुमिच्छसि ॥

BhG XI.7

Here, today, behold the whole universe, movable and immovable, standing in one in My body, O Guḍākeśa, with aught else thou desirest to see. (Tr. A. Besant and B. Das)

All the above citations from the **Bhagavad-Gītā** indicate a few special characteristics of the 'divine body', viz. it is taken up at free will, it is not manifest to the ordinary eye and it encompasses the whole cosmos.

"So in the **Gītā** it is said that the birth, body and movements of the Lord are supernatural (*divya*), a statement which may lend itself to a double interpretation, viz. either that these are created and phantasmal (*nirmāṇa*), and appear as real only through the Lord's *Māyā*, or that these are eternal and real, as the mediaeval *Vaiṣṇavas* so strongly insisted" (Gopinath Kaviraj, *Aspects of Indian Thought*, p. 144).

The Jaina texts speak of five types of body.

औदारिक - वैक्रियिकाहारक - तैजस - कर्मणानि शरीराणि ॥
शीर्यन्त इति शरीराणि । ... नामकर्मोदयाच्छरीरम् । न च घटादिषु सोऽस्तीति नास्त्यतिप्रसङ्गः ।

Comm. on TaSū II.36.1-2

Śarīras are *audārika*, *vaikriyika*, *āhāraka*, *taijasa* and *kārmaṇa*. (Etymologically) that which decays is *śarīra*. The body is known as such on account of advent of *nāma* (name) and *karman* (deed) (in it). This (advent) does not exist in the pitcher etc., hence this (definition of *śarīra*) could not be stretched (to apply to pitcher etc.).

Thus *nāma* (name) and *karman* (deed) these two distinguish *śarīra* from other perishable things.

उदारात् स्थूलवाचिनो भवे प्रयोजने वा ... औदारिकमिति ।

TaVā II.36.5

Udāra means gross; hence the body coming into existence in or for the sake of *udāra* is *audārika*.

The idea here is that *audārika* is that body that is the *pariṇāma* (transformation) of *pudgalas* (atoms) coming into existence for the sake of enjoyment (*bhoga*) of gross objects.

शरीरविविधकरणं विक्रिया । सा प्रयोजनमस्येति वैक्रियकम् ।

TaVā II.36.6

Vikriyā is the (name of the) creation of variety. *Vaikriyika* is (the body) that is (created) for the sake of variety (*vikriyā*).

This is the comparatively subtle body which changes according to the enjoyment of objects.

सूक्ष्मपदार्थ-निर्ज्ञानार्थमसंयम-जिहीर्षया च ।

प्रमत्तसंयतेनाहियते निर्वर्त्यते तदित्याहार्यकम् ॥

TaVā II.36.7

Pramatta-samyata is the person who practises self-control in spite of being full of *pramāda* (carelessness). The body acquired or formed by this person is *āhāraka śarīra*; (it is comparatively subtle) its objective is the perception of subtle objects and shedding off *asamyama* (lack of control).

तेजोनिर्मितत्वात् तैजसम् ।

TaVā II.36.8

Taijasa is that (body) which is made up of *tejas* (splendour, brilliance, fire, light).

This is comparatively more subtle.

कर्मणामिदं कर्मणां समूह इति वा कार्मणम् ।

TaVā II.36.9

The body made up of *karmans* or an aggregation of *karmans* is *kārmaṇa*.

This (body) pervades one gross body to the other for the sake of *bhoga* (enjoyment that includes pleasure and pain).

परं परं सूक्ष्मम् ॥

TaSū II.37

In these five bodies each later one is comparatively more subtle than the previous one.

The *audārika* (gross) body cannot be born without the *kārmaṇa* one.

Astikāya is a very important word in Jaina Philosophy. It is a compound of *asti* (standing for existence in the past, present and future) and *kāya* (an aggregation, structure, piling up).

The word *kāya* has been used there figuratively.

प्रदेशप्रचयो हि कायः । स येषामस्ति तेऽस्तिकाया जीवादयः पञ्चैवोपदिष्टाः ।

TaVā IV.14.5

The aggregation of *pradeśa* (*aṇu*=atoms) is known as *kāya*. Those that have this *kāya* are *asti-kāyas*, five (of them) starting with *jīvāstikāya* are accepted.

In Buddhism the term *kāya* has assumed great importance in the doctrine of the different bodies of the Tathāgata, e.g. *dharmakāya*, *nirmāṇakāya*, *sambhogakāya*.

त्रिकायं देहमध्ये तु चक्ररूपेण कथ्यते ।

HT II.4.51ab

The three *kāyas* are found within the body in the form of *cakras*.
(Tr. D.L. Snellgrove).

The concept of *nirmāṇakāya* is summarised by Gopinath Kaviraj in the following passage:

"The Mādhyamika Buddhist also rejects the necessity of assuming pre-existing matter (for the formation of *Nirmāṇakāya*). Consistently with his doctrine of Universal Void, he holds that such a body, as everything else in creation, is a product from the Void, and is, therefore, identical with it, being devoid of all reality. It is a mere apparition, without an underlying substance. It differs from the normal bodies exactly as the orthodox systems hold in so far as it comes into being and disappears through the conscious effort of the *nirmāṇacitta* (which itself is a creation from the Void) and is entirely free from the compelling influence of *adṛṣṭa karman*:

निर्वस्तुकं निर्माणं निर्माणचित्तेन यथाकाममभिसंस्कृतम् ।

BoBhū I.5

This *nirmāṇa* is without a substance, which has been 'cleansed' by the *nirmāṇacitta* according to its free will.

Thus the *Nirmāṇakāya*, though real to the empiric consciousness, is yet nothing more in its usual acceptation than a mere phantom, an illusory appearance, from the Divine or Buddha's (or Yogin's) point of view. It manifests itself before the phenomenal world for a limited time to serve some definite end and having finished its self-imposed task vanishes into the Fullness (or Void) of the Transcendental Realms. The doctrine of *Avatāra*, in its different forms, is in a sense an aspect of this wider view about the *Nirmāṇakāya*. In the *Nārāyaṇīya* section of the *Mahābhārata* we find that the body which Nārada

beheld of the Lord Nārāyaṇa in Śvetadvīpa was only a phantom body and not His Essence, and as such could be pronounced to be a case of *Nirmāṇakāya*:

एतत् त्वया न विज्ञेयं रूपवानिति दृश्यते ।
माया ह्येषा मया सृष्टा यन्मां पश्यसि नारद ।

MBh XII.326.42ab, 43ab

(This appears to have a form, but is not known by you. I have created this *Māyā* (= *nirmāṇa*) and hence you are seeing me, O Nārada)".

(G. Kaviraj, *Aspects of Indian Thought*, pp. 143–144.)

Āyurveda, being a holistic system of medicine, is concerned with an all-embracing concept of the body. On the gross level, the composition of the body consists of the five elements (→ *bhūtas*, Vol. III), but the texts speak also of the *śarīra* (sentient principle).

पञ्चभूतात्मके देहे ह्याहारः पाञ्चभौतिकः ।

SuSam SūSthā XLVI.526ab

The *deha* (body) composed of five *bhūtas* (needs) food made of five *bhūtas*.

पञ्चमहाभूतशरीरिसमवायः पुरुषः ।

SuSam ŚāSthā I.16

Puruṣa is the *samavāya* (assemblage) of five *mahā-bhūtas* (gross elements constituting the body) and *śarīra* (sentient principle).

शरीरं पाञ्चभौतिकं प्राणिकायः ।

Ḍalhaṇa on SuSam SūSthā XXX.3

Śarīra is the body of living creatures composed of the great elements.

In the genesis of the human body, the function of the five *bhūtas* and the significance of the name *śarīra* in the developed embryo with all the limbs is set forth in the following passage.

शुक्रशोणितं गर्भाशयस्थमात्मप्रकृति-विकार-संमूर्च्छितं 'गर्भ' इत्युच्यते । तं चेतनावस्थितं वायुर्विभजति, तेज एनं पचति, आपः क्लेदयन्ति, पृथिवी संहन्ति, आकाशं विवर्धयति; एवं विवर्धितः स यदा हस्तपादजिह्वा-घ्राण-कर्ण-नितम्बादिभिरङ्गैरूपेतस्तदा 'शरीरम्' इति संज्ञां लभते ।

SuSam ŚāSthā V.3

The combined semen and ovum (*śukra* and *śoṇita*) in the womb, mixed with (the eight categories known as) the *prakṛti* and (her

sixteen categories known as) the *vikāra* and hidden in by the *ātman* (self-conscious self) is called the foetus (*garbha*). There is consciousness in the embryo. The *vāyu* (the vital force) divides it (into *doṣa*, *dhātu*, *mala*, etc., limbs and organs, etc.). The *tejas*, (or the heat latent in the fecundated matter), gives rise to the metabolism of the tissues; the *ap* (water) keeps it in a liquid state; the *kṣiti* (earth) is embodied in the shape of its species; and the *ākāśa* (ether) contributes to its growth and development. A fully developed foetus with all its limbs or parts such as the hands, feet, tongue, nose, ears, buttocks, etc. and the sense organs is called *śarīra* or body.
(Tr. K.L. Bhishagratna)

The **Caraka Saṃhitā** (ŚāSthā VI.4) describes *śarīra* in similar terms. It is defined there as the abode (*adhiṣṭhāna*) of the sentient principle (*cetana*), aggregate of the transformation of five gross elements and equal combination (*sama-yoga*) of all components. The *saṃyoga* (combination) of atoms and their separation are said to be the cause of the 'birth' and 'death' of the body (CarSam ŚāSthā VII.16–17). *Vāyu* and *karma-svabhāva* (nature of *karman*) are said to be the agents of this combination of separation.

यदा संयोजकस्वभावेन कर्मणा परिगृहीतो वायुर्भवति तदा परमाणूनां संयोगं कुर्वञ्छरीरमारभते । यदा तु वियोजनस्वभावेन कर्मणा वायुः परिगृहीतो भवति तदा विभागं परमाणूनां विनाशरूपं जनयतीत्यर्थः ।

Cakrapāṇi on CarSam ŚāSthā VII.16–17

When *vāyu* is seized by the nature of *saṃyoga* (combination), then it forms the body by bringing about the combination of *paramāṇus* (atoms). When, however, it (*vāyu*) is seized by *karman* having the nature of separation it brings about the division of the *paramāṇus* (atoms) in the form of destruction (death).

Karman here stands for the unseen accumulation of the fruits of actions (*adrṣṭa*) and action (*kriyā*).

बुद्धीन्द्रियाणि पञ्चैव पञ्च कर्मेन्द्रियाणि च ।

CarSam ŚāSthā I.64ab

Five sense-organs and five motor organs [are meant here].
(Tr. P. Ghosal)

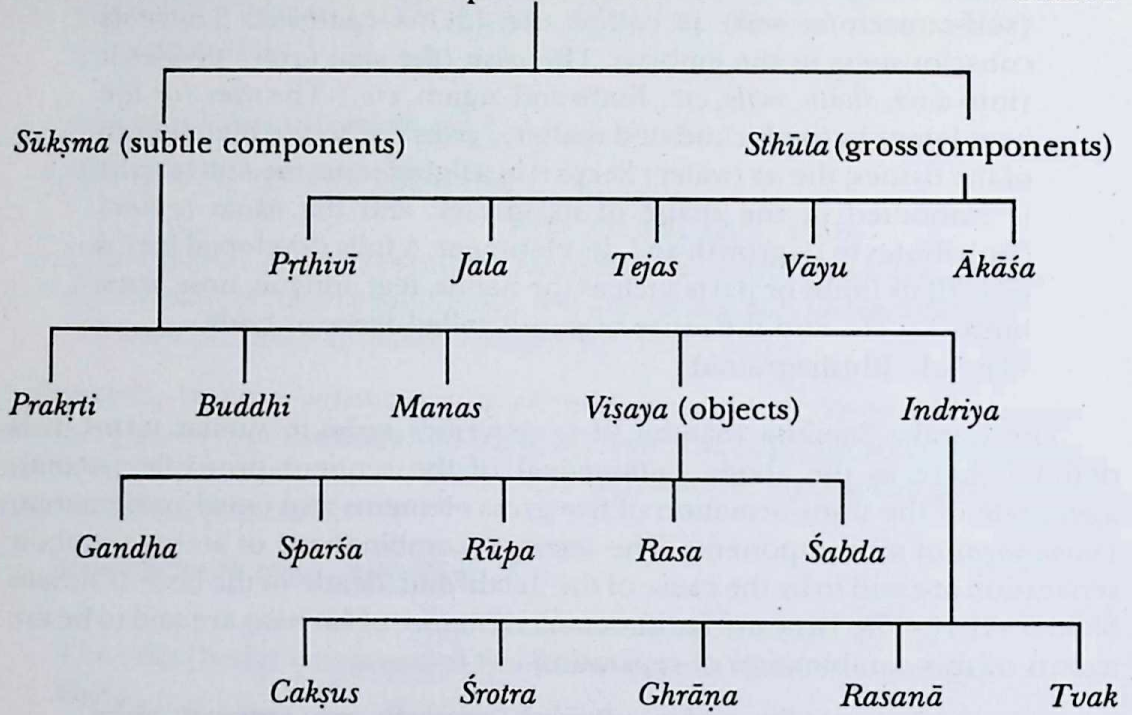
एकादशेन्द्रियाणि भवन्ति ।

Cakrapāṇi on CarSam ŚāSthā I.66

Organs are eleven in number. (Tr. P. Ghosal)

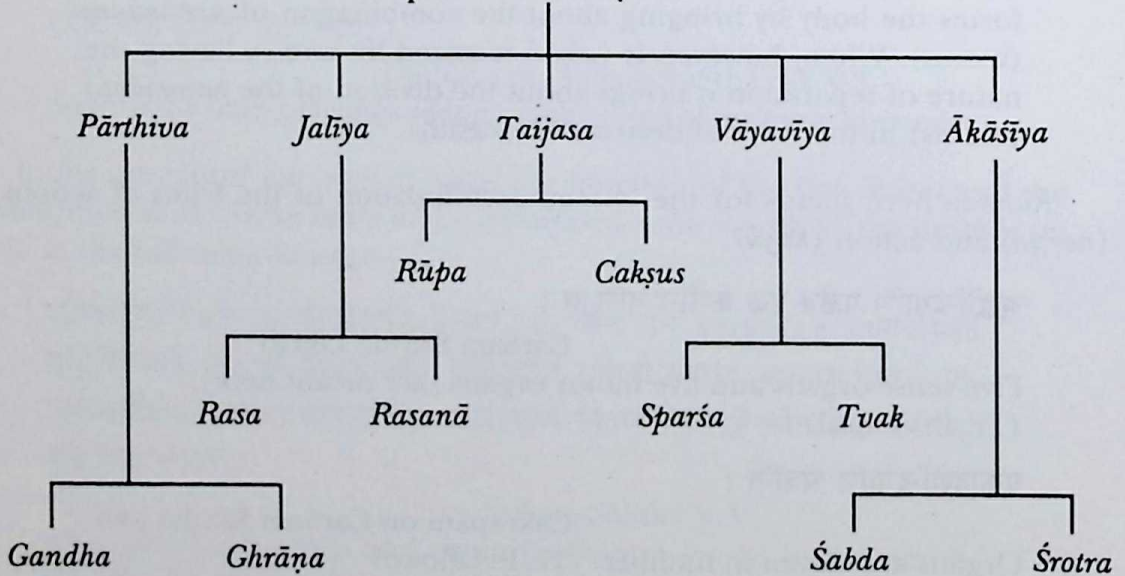
Components of Śarīra

Chart I



The components of *sūkṣma śarīra* (subtle body) also are gross.

Components of Sūkṣma Śarīra



तत्र पूर्वाणि पञ्चबुद्धीन्द्रियाणि, इतराणि पञ्चकर्मेन्द्रियाणि ।

SuSam ŚāSthā I.4

Of these foregoing organs the first five are intellectual or sense-organs (*buddhi-indriya*), the next five being operative (*karma-indriya*).

(Tr. K.L. Bhishagratna)

Āyurveda, also speaks of the components of the subtle body (*sūkṣma śarīra*).
(See Chart I)

The types of bodies are also classified according to the three *guṇas*. Three *tāmasa*, six *rājasa* and seven *sāttvika* bodies are described in the *Suśruta Saṃhitā* (ŚāSthā V.81–98) as follows:

Tāmasa: I. *pāśava guṇa* (having the quality of *paśu* or quadrupeds), II. *mātsya-sattva* (fish) and III. *vānaspatya-sattva* (vegetable kingdom).

Rājasa: I. *āsura-sattva*, II. *śarpa-sattva* (serpents and other reptiles), III. *śākuna-kāya* (birds), IV. *rākṣasa-kāya*, V. *paiśāca-kāya*, and VI. *preta-sattva*.

Sāttvika: I. *brāhma-kāya*, II. *māhendra-kāya*, III. *vāruṇa-kāya*, IV. *kaubera-kāya*, V. *gāndharva-kāya*, VI. *yāmya-sattva* and VII. *ṛṣi-sattva*.

Perhaps in no other system of Indian thought has the body received greater symbolical and spiritual meaning as in Tantra and Haṭhayoga. Here the body is not considered as an obstacle on the spiritual path, but as an instrument which is described and used in all its subtle dimensions. Thus (1) the body is an important means in meditation or worship. Besides, (2) not only gross and subtle levels, but also a transcendent level of the body is accepted. Finally (3) a cosmic view of Śiva's body is expounded.

1) Contemplation on or worship of the body in worship thus:

Abhinavagupta describes the role of the body in worship thus:

गलिते विषयौन्मुख्ये पारिमित्ये विलापिते ॥

देहे किमवशिष्येत शिवानन्दरसादृते ।

शिवानन्दरसापूर्णं षट्त्रिंशत्तत्त्वनिर्भरम् ॥

देहं दिवानिशं पश्यन्नर्चयन्त्याच्छिवात्मकम् ।

TĀI XV.284cd–286ab

When the intentness on worldly objects is shed off and limitation is discarded, what remains as the residue in the body, except the *rasa* or Śiva's bliss? The body is completely full with the blissful essence of Śiva and is the very abode of thirty-six principles. One should behold it (in this way) day and night and worship it as such. Then one will be identical with Śiva. (Tr. H.N. Chakravarty)

एवं विश्वाध्वसम्पूर्णं कालव्यापारचित्रितम् ।
 देशकालमयस्पन्दसद्य देहं विलोकयेत् ॥
 तथा विलोक्यमानोऽसौ विश्वान्तर्देवतामयः ।
 ध्येयः पूज्यश्च तर्प्यश्च तदाविष्टो विमुच्यते ॥

TĀI XII.6-7

Thus one should view the body as being full of all the *adhvā* (lit. paths) and painted or variegated with the activity of time. It is the abode of vibrative pulsation that has assumed the nature of space and time. When the body that is filled with the divine that shines in the core of the universe, is being viewed like this, it is to be meditated upon, to be worshipped, to be propitiated and the one who becomes fully possessed of it, gets liberated. (Tr. H.N. Chakravarty)

The Śiva-Sūtra describes the reabsorption of all the *tattvas* in the body:

शरीरे संहारः कलानाम् ॥

महाभूतात्मकं पुर्यष्टकरूपं, समनान्तं यत् स्थूलं, सूक्ष्मं, परं शरीरं, तत्र याः पृथिव्यादिशिवान्ततत्त्वरूपाः
 कला भागाः, तासां संहारः, स्वकारणे लयभावनया, दाहादिचिन्तनयुक्त्या वा ध्यातव्यः, इति शेषः ।

ŚSūVim III.4

Dissolution of the various parts of the *tattvas* in the body (gross, subtle, and causal) should be practised by *bhāvanā*.

By *śarīra* is meant the gross body consisting of the five gross elements, the subtle body (consisting of the five *tanmātras*, *manas*, *buddhi* and *ahaṅkāra*) and the highest or the causal body consisting of *prāṇa* and subtle *manas* up to *samanā*. In this body (i.e. in the physical, subtle, and causal body) dissolution has to be contemplated upon all the constitutive parts from the earth up to Śiva into the preceding causes by *bhāvanā* or by the device of burning etc. This should be taken as the remaining part of the *sūtra*. (Tr. J. Singh)

In the Śiva-Sūtra the whole world is to be meditated upon as the body:

दृश्यं शरीरम् ॥

यद्यद् दृश्यं बाह्यमाभ्यन्तरं वा, तत्तत् सर्वमहमिदमिति सदाशिववन्महासमापत्त्या स्वाङ्गकल्पमस्य
 स्फुरति, न भेदेन ।

ŚSūVim I.14

The whole visible world becomes (is) like the body (of the *yogin*). Whatever is perceptible whether inwardly or outwardly, all that appears to this *yogī* like his own body, i.e. identical with himself and

not as something different from him. This is so because of his great accomplishment (of identity with the universal consciousness). His feeling is 'I am this' just as the feeling of *Sadāśiva* with regard to the entire universe is 'I am this'. (Tr. J. Singh)

शरीरं हविः ॥

सर्वैर्यत् प्रमातृत्वेन अभिषिक्तं स्थूलसूक्ष्मादिस्वरूपं शरीरं तत् महायोगिनः परस्मिन् चिदग्नौ हूयमानं हविः ... ।

ŚSūVim II.8

(Of such a person) the body becomes an oblation (to be poured in the fire of highest consciousness).

Of that great *yogī*, all this gross, subtle and causal body which is affected with the idea of knower or 'I' becomes an oblation to be offered to the highest consciousness-fire. (Tr. J. Singh)

चित्तस्थितिवच्छरीरकरणबाह्येषु ॥

ŚSū III.39

As in the case of the states of the mind, so also in the case of the body, organs of sense and external things, there should be vitalization with the bliss of the transcendental consciousness. (Tr. J. Singh)

The body is described as the best place of worship.

देह एव परं लिङ्गं सर्वतत्त्वात्मकं शिवम् ।

देवताचक्रसंजुष्टं पूजाधाम तदुत्तमम् ॥

TĀI XXIX.171

The very body is the highest *liṅga*, being of the essence of all *tattvas* (principles) and it is Śiva himself. It is endowed with the *cakra* (cycle) of the gods and is the most excellent place of worship. (Tr. H.N. Chakravarty)

The body is the 'house' of the divine, where He enjoys with his consort.

त्वां देव्या सह देहदेवसदने देवार्चयेऽहर्निशम् ॥

TĀI XXIX.176cd

O God! I worship you day and night, along with the divine consort in the body, the abode of the divine. (Tr. H.N. Chakravarty)

2) The transcendental body:

तत्त्वत्रयं परं यच्च सर्वतत्त्वाध्ववर्जितम् ॥

तेन चापूरिताशेषं सा तत्त्वाध्वपरा तनुः ।

SvT IV.407cd-408ab

The supreme triad of *tattvas* is free from all *tattvas* (principles) and *adhvās* (paths). Everything is entirely filled by it. That is verily called the highest body transcending all *tattvas* and *adhvās*.

(Tr. H.N. Chakravarty)

According to Kṣemarāja, the triad is (1) the pure self, (2) the *unmanāśakti* and (3) Śīva. The body is of two types, the one is made of thirty-six categories and the second is known as *nādaśaktyātmā tanuḥ* (body made of *nādaśakti*).

The bodies of Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śīva have been said to be made of *nāda* in Saṅgītaśāstra under the influence of Tantra (cf. BrD I.19 and SR I.1.1; I.3.2).

The attainment of a divine body by the spiritual seeker is thus described:

स्वाज्ञया देवताभावाद् विधिना देशिकोत्तमः ।

तदा विलीनतत्त्वोऽयं शिष्यो दिव्यतनुर्भवेत् ॥

ŚāTil V.118

The excellent spiritual guide on account of the divine nature dissolves, in the reverse order, the syllables that have been placed in the body of the disciple by his command and when all the categories have thus been dissolved, the disciple attains the divine body.

(Tr. H.N. Chakravarty)

How the body of the spiritual seeker becomes different from ordinary bodies is stated in the following passage.

नहि सद्भावमात्रेण देहोऽसावन्यदेहवत् ।

अहन्तायां हि देहत्वं सा ध्वस्ता तद्देहं ध्रुवम् ॥

TĀI XV.236

By the very fact of existence, the body (of the seeker) is not like any other body. *Dehatva* (the ordinary state of being body) exists only because there is *ahantā* (I-ness, self-identification). When that (*ahantā*) is destroyed, it (*dehatva*) is burnt out. (Tr. H.N. Chakravarty)

The process of purification of the body is interesting because it associates the five elements at their subtle level where specific letters embody them. *Ākāśa* would seem to be identified with Śīva and getting established in *Śīva-bhāva* is the first step. Then comes concentration on *pṛthvī*, followed by *vāyu* for drying, *agni* for burning, again *vāyu* for sweeping away and *varuṇa* for washing away (cf. SvT II.36-38).

The transcendental body of the Lord is thus described.

मूलाद्यसंभवाच्छाक्तं वपुर्नो तादृशं प्रभोः ।

MrgĀ vp III.8ab

The bodily form of the Lord consisting of (divine) energy (*śākta*) is not similar (to our bodies), since it is free from origin (original impurity) etc. (Tr. B. Bäumer)

Thus in the attainment of the divine form the gross body is a laudable instrument, but if this objective is not fulfilled, the body is nothing but a burden.

भारोऽविवेकिनः शास्त्रं भारो ज्ञानं च रागिणः ।

अशान्तस्य मनो भारं भारोऽनात्मविदो वपुः ॥

LYVās vaip II.30

The *śāstra* (textual tradition of any discipline) is a burden for one who does not have the discriminative faculty (*viveka*) and knowledge is a burden for one who is attached (to worldly objects). The mind is a burden for one who is not at peace. The body is a burden for one who has no knowledge of the self. (Tr. H.N. Chakravarty)

The **Hathayoga Pradīpikā** speaks of *deha-siddhi* (the perfection or accomplishment of the body) at the biological and psychic level.

देहसिद्धिं च लभते वज्रोल्याभ्यासयोगतः ।

HYPrad III.103

One attains perfection of body by practising *vajrolī* (a *mudrā* of *hathayoga*). (Tr. R.S. Bhattacharya)

According to the commentary, *deha-siddhi* means four bodily qualities, viz. beauty, charm or grace, strength and adamant hardness.

3) The cosmic body of Śiva:

According to Śaiva theology, the whole universe is the body of the Divine. This metaphor throws light on the understanding of both, body and universe.

किं च यावदिदं बाह्यमान्तरोपायसंमतम् ।

तत्प्रकाशात्मतामात्रं शिवस्यैव निजं वपुः ॥

TĀI II.15

Moreover, whatever shines in the view of external and internal means (*upāya*) is nothing but in essence the light which is the very body of the Lord Śiva himself. (Tr. H.N. Chakravarty)

जगद्द्वीपाकारं जलधिवलयं तेन कृतमित्यनेनैवोन्नेयं धृतमहिमदिव्यं तव वपुः ॥

ŚMSSt 17

The world seems only an island girdled by the ocean. By that alone

your divine body with its enduring greatness can be imagined.
(Tr. W.N. Brown)

Darśanas

The Sāṃkhya system of philosophy has accepted the general statement that the body consists of the five *bhūtas* or elements.

धार्यमप्यन्तःकरणत्रयस्य प्राणादिलक्षणया वृत्त्या शरीरम् । तच्च पार्थिवादि पाञ्चभौतिकम् ।

SāṃTKau 32

The *śarīra* has to be borne or held through the *ṛtti* (mode in action) of the threefold inner organ (*manas*, *buddhi* and *ahaṅkāra*), known as *prāṇa* etc. That (body) is made of the five *bhūtas* starting from earth.

Again it is said:

न पाञ्चभौतिकं शरीरं बहूनामुपादानायोगात् ॥

बहूनां भिन्नजातीयानां चोपादानत्वं घटपटादिस्थले न दृष्टमिति सजातीयमेवोपादानम् । इतरच्च भूतचतुष्टयमुपष्टम्भकमित्याशयेन पाञ्चभौतिकव्यवहारः ।

PravBh on SāṃSū V.102

The body is not made up of the five *bhūtas* because the acquisition of many does not take place.

The use of many (substances) of different categories is not seen in the pitcher, cloth, etc., hence the use of (substances) of one and the same category (is acceptable in the case of the body, viz. *prṛthvī*). The other four *bhūtas* are *upaṣṭambhakas* (supporters of *prṛthvī*) and hence it is said that (the body) is made of five *bhūtas*.

According to the Sāṃkhya-Sūtra (V.103) the body is not restricted to the gross level, because there is also the *ātivāhika* body. *Ātivāhika* literally means that which performs *ativāha*, i.e. excessive enduring, here it means the body which holds or supports the carrying over of the subtle body (*sūkṣma śarīra*) from the gross body to another. The Sāṃkhya-Sūtra (V.3) describes six types of bodies:

1. *ūṣmaja* (lit. born of heat) like wasps and bees;
2. *aṇḍaja* (born of egg) like birds, snakes, etc.;
3. *jarāyuja* (born from the womb) like men etc.;
4. *udbhijja* (born of *udbheda*, lit. breaking upwards) like trees, plants, etc.;

5. *saṃkalpaja* (born of will or determination) like Sanaka etc. (the four brothers who are eternal *kumāras*, young boys) and
6. *siddhija* (born of some *siddhi*, i.e. extra-ordinary power or accomplishment) like Raktabīja (the demon who had attained a boon to the effect that each drop of his blood that would be shed would give rise to one new body).

The body is not restricted to these six types because they are all *sthūla*, made of earth.

Thus *pr̥thvī* supported by the other elements is the material cause (*upādāna kāraṇa*) of *śarīra*; *prāṇa* is accepted as the instrumental or efficient cause (*nimitta kāraṇa*) (cf. PravBh on SāmSū V.112–15).

There is yet another category of body accepted in Sāmkhya.

सर्वेषां गुणानां प्राधान्यात् तन्निमित्तानि शरीराणि आदिसर्गे सांसिद्धिकानि उत्पद्यन्ते ।

YuDīp on SāmKā 15

On account of the supremacy of the *guṇas* (*sattva* etc.) bodies caused by them come into existence naturally (i.e. without the help of any external factor) in the beginning of creation.

(Tr. R.S. Bhattacharya)

The birth of human beings even without passing through the mother's womb is also spoken of.

मनुष्याणां (शरीरं) तु जरायुजम् । धर्म-शक्तिविशेषात् कस्यचिद् अन्यथाऽपि भवति ।
यथा द्रोण-कृप-कृपी- धृष्टद्युम्नादीनाम् ।

YuDīp on SāmKā 39

The body of human beings is born from the womb. Some, however, have their birth (in the body) through a different process on account of particular merit as for example, (the bodies) of Droṇa, Kṛpa, Kṛpī, Dhṛṣṭadyumna, etc. (Tr. R.S. Bhattacharya)

In the Yoga system (YSū IV.4) the *yogin* is said to be endowed with the power to "project on the one hand a desired Personality (*prayojakacitta*) to direct them to his will – all from the stuff of pure Egoity (*asmitā*)" (G. Kaviraj, *Aspects of Indian Thought*, p. 142).

Āsana (specific posture of the body) is one of the eight *aṅgas* of Yoga and thus the prime position accorded to the body in spiritual culture is obvious.

The body is defined in the Nyāya system as the basis of action:

चेष्टेन्द्रियार्थाश्रयः शरीरम् ॥

NySū I.1.11

The body is the vehicle of actions of sense-organs and of objects.
(Tr. G.N. Jha)

And also:

तस्य भोगायतनं शरीरम् ।

NySūBh I.1.9

The body is the receptacle of the soul's experiences. (Tr. G.N. Jha)

The commentary (NySūBh I.1.11) explains *ceṣṭā* as the means adopted by the *ṣuṣa* for obtaining what is desired and discarding what is not desired. The *indriyas* get directed towards proper or improper objects only because of the *anugraha* (support) of the *śarīra*; when the body is destroyed, the *indriyas* also stop functioning. The body is the receptacle of *artha* because the pleasure and pain resulting are experienced in the body itself. No object can become the means of experience of pleasure or pain for the individual without the body.

The *samavāyin* (inseparable) cause of the human body is only *prthvī*, the other elements have only a relationship of *saṃyoga* (conjunction). In other *lokas* (realms) bodies made of water, fire and air are also in existence, which are composed in conjunction with other elements (cf. NySūBh III.1.28).

The above definition of *śarīra* applies also to trees and the like, because they also have *ceṣṭā* or activity, injury and the process of healing is visible in them, which proves that they are with *prāṇa*. The use of the word *śarīra* for the dead body is only secondary.

The Vaiśeṣika system also accepts the formation of the body from *prthvī*.

तत् पुनः पृथिव्यादिकार्यद्रव्यं त्रिविधं शरीरेन्द्रियविषयसंज्ञकम् ॥

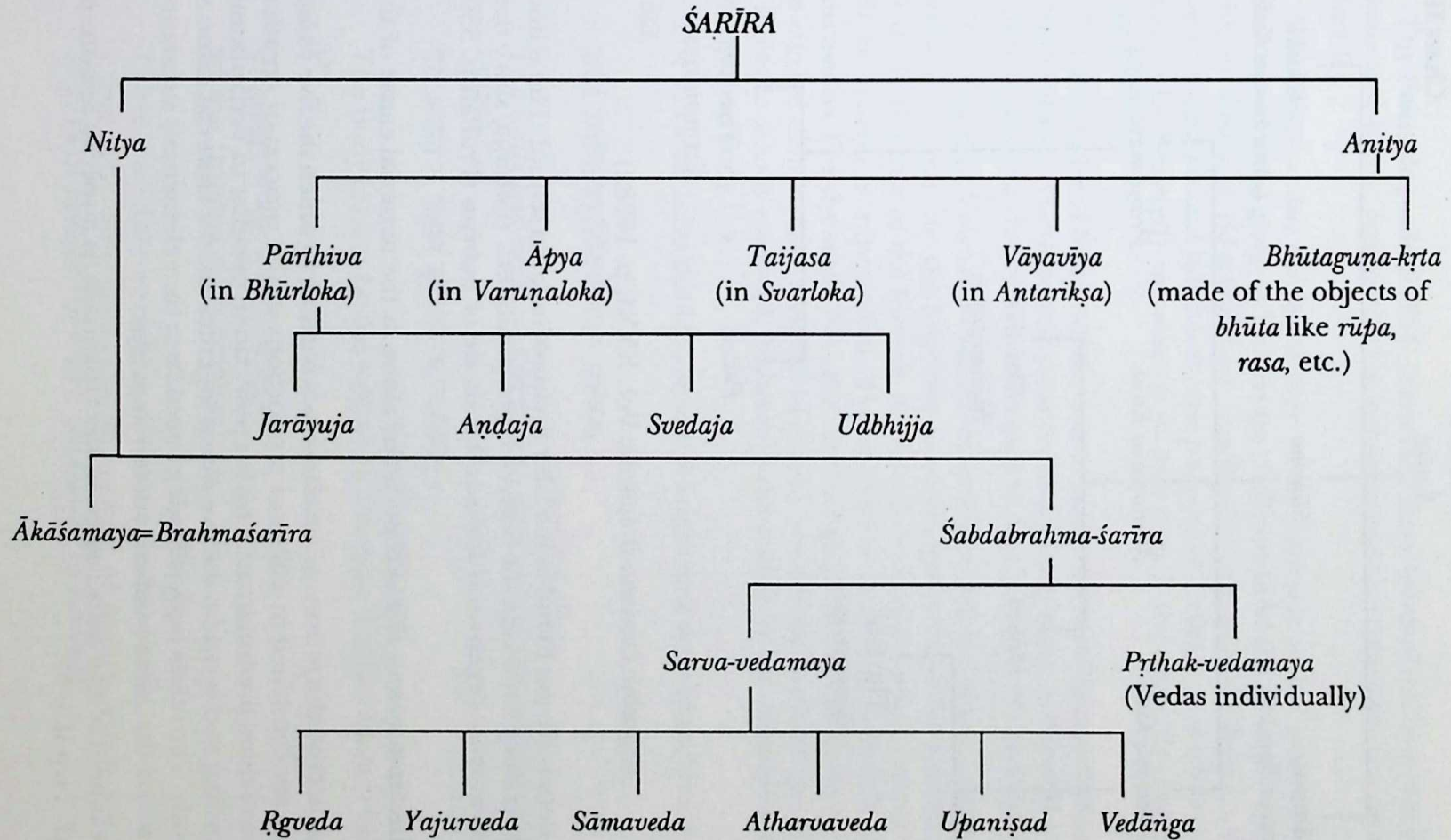
VaiśSū IV.2.1

The effects of (the elements) earth etc. are threefold, viz. *śarīra*, senses and object of perception.

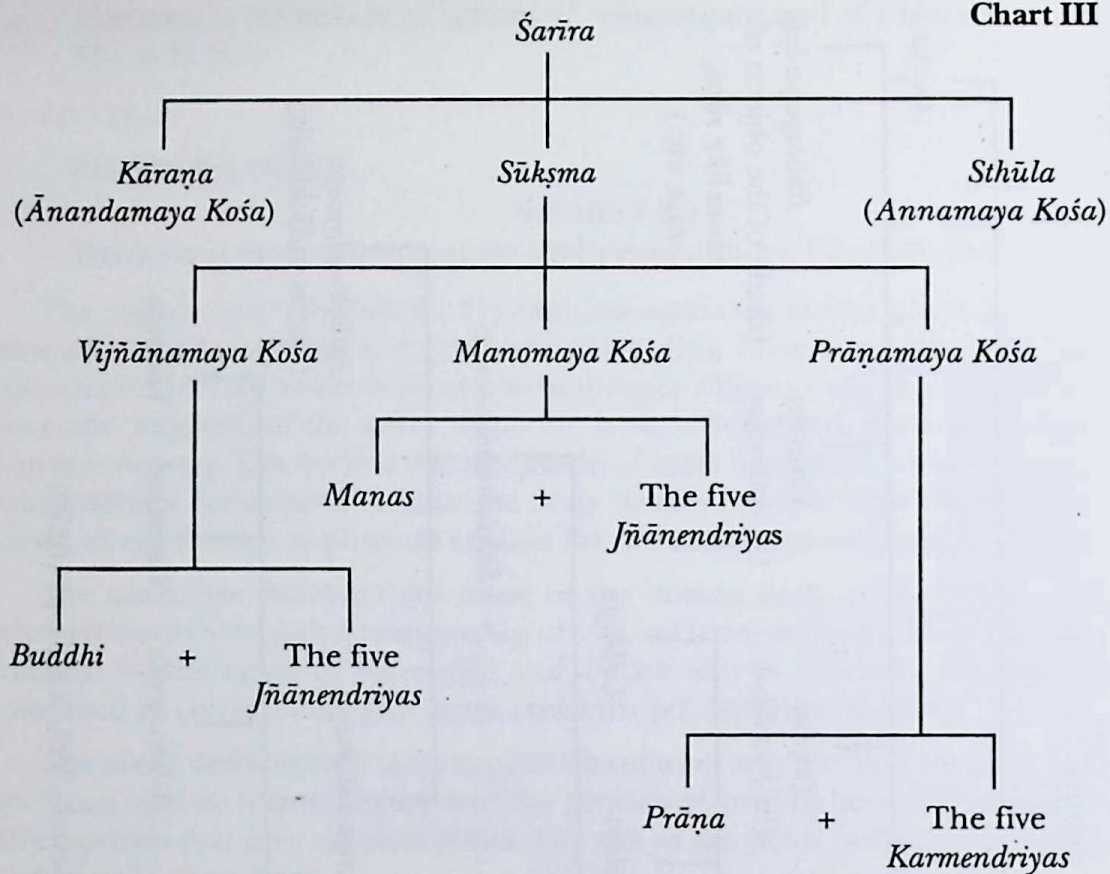
The argument that *śarīra* is made of five *bhūtas* has been refuted (in VaiśSū IV.2.1) by saying that the tangible elements, viz. fire, water and earth cannot be combined with the intangible elements, viz. space and air. The combination of the three tangible ones is also not acceptable, because the qualities of the three cannot appear at one place (VaiśSū IV.2.3). However, the combination of atoms of other substances is not denied (VaiśSū IV.2.4).

Kumārila Bhaṭṭa's **Tantravārttika** (III.1.13), one of the basic texts of Pūrva-Mīmāṃsā, expounds that bodies are different from one another due to *karma-śaktis*, the powers of *karman*, *prakṛtis* (*upādānas* or materials) and *ārambhas* (specific structures). The details of the types of bodies described there, are summarised in Chart II.

Chart II



(Bhāratīya Darśana Br̥hatkośa, Vol. XXXI, p. 10279)



(*Bhāratīya Darśana Br̥hatkośa*, Vol. XXXI, p. 10282)

These details are not found in the later Bhāṭṭa-Mīmāṃsā school. The school of Prabhākara does not accept the body of trees, plants, etc. (*udbhijja*) since they do not possess sense-organs and *śarīra* is the abode of *indriyas* (PraPañ p. 330–31).

The Mīmāṃsā system also accepts *pṛthvī* alone as the material cause of the gross body.

Vedānta accepts the process of *pañcīkaraṇa* according to which the five *bhūtas* or elements are combined in different proportions in the process of creation making one of them predominant. This is a postulation peculiar to Vedānta and hence according to this system the five *bhūtas* together are the material cause of the gross body. The subtle body is made of *apañcīkṛta* (not elemental) substance or elements and the *kāraṇa śarīra* is rooted in *avidyā*.

The treatment of five *kośas* rooted in the Upaniṣads, is a special feature of Vedānta (cf. TUp II.1–5).

The **Paingalopaniṣad** (II.4) relates the three levels of the body, i.e. the *sthūla*, *sūkṣma* and *kāraṇa śarīras* with the five *kośas* and this treatment is summarised in Chart III.

Viśiṣṭādvaita also holds the view of the universe as the body of God. The definition of *śarīra* given by Rāmānuja (ŚrīBh on BrSū II.1.9) implies that (1) the *śarīra* of *Īśvara* is *cid-acid-dravya* (intelligent and non-intelligent substance), *Īśvara* regulates it and holds it for the purpose of creation, and it is *śeṣa* (residue, never to be finished) in relation to him who is the *śeṣin* (the holder of the residue).

(2) The *śarīra* of Śiva or of the soul is made of the substance of *bhūtas* for the purpose of the experience of pleasure and pain (*bhoga*), is regulated and held by him and is *śeṣa* (residue) with regard to him, i.e. it never gets exhausted.

The Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava tradition founded by Kṛṣṇa Caitanya, deals with the body at two levels, viz. the Supreme Lord (*bhagavān*) and the individuated soul (*jīvas*). In the case of the former, the doctrine of *nitya-svarūpa* (eternal form) as well as *avatāra* is expounded. The *avatāra* is viewed at different levels and dimensions. For the soul (*jīva*) the ultimate goal that is prescribed is entry into the eternal divine play (*nitya-līlā* of *goloka*) and for the purpose the attainment of a *siddha-deha* is essential, because participation in the *nitya-līlā* requires an appropriate body.

The Purāṇas echo the Upanisadic thought and also contain the concept of →*līlā*.

शरीरं रथमित्याहुरिन्द्रियाण्यस्य वाजिनः ।

AgPur 373.17ab

The body has been said to be the chariot and the organs are the horses.

देह आत्मा न भवति दृश्यत्वाच्च घटादिवत् ।

AgPur 377.2ab

The body cannot be the self, since it is *dṛśya* (visible, known) like a jar.

परमार्थभेदो न नगो न पशुर्न च पादपः ।

शरीराच्च विभेदाच्च य एते कर्मयोनयः ॥

AgPur 380.34

There is no difference in reality between a mountain, an animal or a tree. The differences are on account of bodies, which are the sources of *karman* (or which are rooted in *karman*).

शरीरं धर्मसंयुक्तं रक्षणीयं प्रयत्नतः ।

AgPur 372.17ab

The body which is associated with *dharma* (righteousness) must be maintained carefully.

The same idea is expressed by Kālidāsa in the proverbial statement:

शरीरमाद्यं खलु धर्मसाधनम् ॥

Kum V.33cd

The body is the prime requisite for or means of religious performance.

In the Cārvāka system the body is composed of four elements (excluding space).

पृथिव्यादीनि भूतानि चत्वारि तत्त्वानि । तेभ्य एव देहाकारपरिणतेभ्यः किण्वादिभ्यो
(वृक्षविशेषनिर्यासः किण्वः) मदशक्तिवच्चैतन्यमुपजायते ।

SarDSaṅg (Cārvāka Darśana) p. 2

There are four *tattvas*, the elements, earth, etc. when they get transformed into a body, *caitanya* (sentience or intelligence) is born from them just as the power to intoxicate is born from *kiṇva* (the juice of a tree) and the like.

Thus the collection (*saṅghāta*) of four *bhūtas* is said to give rise to consciousness (*caitanya*) and that completes the body.

Manifestation in the Arts

In the arts, the purpose of assuming or creating a 'body' is 'creation' which itself involves a process of *līlā* or *māyā*. In the **R̥gveda** Indra is said to move towards his worshippers in various bodies, through his creative powers (*māyā*) (cf. *indro māyābhiḥ puru-rūpa īyate*, RV VI.47.18c). The first part of this very *mantra* is the famous passage *rūpaṃ rūpaṃ pratirūpo babhūva*, "for each form, he became (assumed) a representative form."

The other purpose is experience (*bhoga*) without the tinge of attachment (*rāga*) and repulsion (*dveṣa*) which in itself combines liberation from the 'routine' experience of life and also from the 'limited self' as the seat of experience (*parimita-pramāṭṛ-bhāva*).

In the *Nāṭya-Śāstra*, the word *śarīra* or its derivatives have been used in the following contexts:

- (a) *Śārīrī vīṇā* (bodily stringed instrument in general), i.e. the sound-producing organism in the human body as distinct from the wooden (*dāraṇī*) *vīṇā* (cf. NŚ XXVIII.15).

- (b) *Śārīra svara*: musical notes produced in or through the body (cf. NŚ VI.27; XXVIII.12) and *śārīra* as distinct from *vaiṇasvaras* (musical notes produced in or through *vīṇā*), *svaras* associated with the three *sthānas*, viz. *mandra* (low), *madhya* (middle) and *tāra* (high) (cf. NŚ XXIX.17).

Thus the body is the main instrument of music, sound and all other instruments are its extensions.

- (c) The 'outer' structure of drama in the form of plot (*itivr̥tta*) has been called *śārīra* (NŚ XIX.1). Here the element of structure and the 'outer' function of the plot as distinct from the inner essence or *rasa* could be understood to be conveyed by the word *śārīra*.
- (d) In some *gītakas* (song-forms) the main structure or 'body' of the song form is called *śārīra* and the 'added' section is given other names like *śīrṣaka* (that which is worn on the head like a crest) (cf. NŚ XXXI.169, 203).
- (e) The experience of *rasa* is said to permeate the body just as dry wood is enveloped by fire.

शरीरं व्याप्यते तेन शुष्कं काष्ठमिवाग्निना ॥

NŚ VII.7cd

The body (biophysio-nervous system) is permeated by that (meaning) just as dry wood is (enveloped) by fire.

In the context of *abhinaya* → *aṅga* is the word used constantly in the *Nāṭya-Śāstra* and never is *deha* or *śārīra* or any other word used (cf. I.119, prose portion in VI, p. 289, VI.1, 4 for *aṅga* and VIII.10 for *āṅgika abhinaya*). There is one solitary reference to *śārīra abhinaya* as one of the three varieties of *āṅgika abhinaya*, the other two being *mukhaja* (pertaining to the face), and *ceṣṭākṛta* (made of gesture or action).

The famous verse of the *Saṅgīta-Ratnākara* describing Śiva's body, speech, mind and ornaments in cosmic terms is notable here.

आङ्गिकं भुवनं यस्य वाचिकं सर्ववाङ्मयम् ।

आहार्यं चन्द्रतारादि तं नुमः सात्त्विकं शिवम् ॥

SR VII.1

We bow down to the *Sāttvika Śiva*, whose *āṅgika* (bodily movement or body itself) is the universe, whose *vācika* (verbal expression) is (manifested as the) whole expanse of verbal communication (and) whose *āhārya* ('acquired' costumes, ornaments, make-up, etc.) is the moon and the sun.

The four types of *abhinaya* (acting) are associated with the cosmic form of Śiva in the above passage.

Thus Tantra has deeply influenced the thought about the transcendental nature of the body, its fundamental place in spiritual culture and the view of the cosmos as one structure embodying the Supreme Soul has been reflected in the arts.

In Saṅgītaśāstra, *śārīra* is definitely associated with the production of *svara* (musical note) and with the human voice which is known as *śārīra* (born with the body) (cf. SR III.82). No other word is used in this context.

The process of sound-production in the human body as described in the Śikṣās (cf. Pāṣik 6–9) and in the **Saṅgīta-Ratnākara** (I.3.3) speaks of the *agni* or *vahni* (lit. fire) in the *kāya* or *deha* respectively. Only *piṇḍa* and *deha* are used in the context of human genesis in the **Saṅgīta-Ratnākara** (I.2 entitled Piṇḍotpatti Prakaraṇa). *Kṣetra* is associated with *kāku* (timbre) of the human voice (cf. SR II.124).

The stream of thought that deprecates the body as a cause of bondage is not relevant in the arts. The body of art is positively important or basic, because it represents the process of (i) extension from the seed to the tree, from the point to the 'design', (ii) transformation of the elements, (iii) harmonious combination of the 'poles' of 'hot' and 'cold' or 'soft' and 'hard', the Vedic *agni* and *soma* (cf. *agnīṣomātmako dehaḥ*, ŚāTil I.39).

In the arts the 'seed' is →*rasa* in the heart of the *kavi* (creator, who is also called *Brahmā*), its extension takes the form of poetry, music, architecture, sculpture, painting, etc. This extension involves a process of the 'transformation of *loka* or nature' comparable to the transformation of the *bhūtas* in the formation of the body, and also a process of structuring on the analogy of the body. Organic form, therefore, assumes basic importance in the arts. The *upādāna* (material cause) in the different arts is presented in Chart IV.

The following chart summarizes the role of the body in the various art-forms:

Chart IV

Art	<i>Upādāna</i> (material) of the body	Role of the human body	The regulating principle
Poetry	<i>Śabda</i> (word) and <i>artha</i> (meaning).	Performer in 'recitation or silent reader and listener.	<i>Rasa</i> or <i>dhvani</i> , the latter also confirms <i>rasa</i> .
Drama	Plot and text.	Performance through <i>āṅgika</i> , <i>vācika</i> , <i>sāttvika</i> and <i>āhārya abhinaya</i> and spectator-cum-listener.	<i>Rasa</i>
Music	<i>Nāda</i> and its extension as <i>svara</i> , <i>tāla</i> and <i>pada</i> , the melodic, rhythmic and textual components which may or may not combine linguistic meaning.	Performer with the voice or instrument and listener.	<i>Rasa</i>
Dance	Movement, gestures and postures of the body, which may or may not represent linguistic meaning.	Performer with his body and spectator.	<i>Rasa</i>
Architecture	<i>Bindu</i> (point) and line, taking the form of circle, square, triangle, etc. and stone, wood, brick, mortar, etc.	In planning, interpretation and execution and spectator.	The cosmic worldview and <i>rasa</i> .
Sculpture	As in architecture.	In planning, interpretation and execution and spectator.	Iconographical canons and <i>rasa</i> .
Painting	Line and colour.	In planning, interpretation and execution and spectator.	Iconographical canons and <i>rasa</i> .

Conclusion

The body has been generally accepted to be an instrument for fulfilling the purpose of creation (*śṛṣṭi*) and *līlā* (playful sport) at the macro-level and *bhoga* (experience of pleasure and pain) at the micro-level. The idea of *mokṣa*, release or liberation in its various conceptions is also linked with *bhoga* and hence the body also becomes an instrument of spiritual culture for the sake of *mokṣa*. Basically, two streams of the conception of *mokṣa* could be identified, viz. one where the gross and subtle body has to be shed or annihilated and the other where the two have to be transformed into the *para* (transcendent) or *divya* (divine) body.

Śarīra as a physical aspect is as important as its subtle cause. The physical body is the indicator of all that happens in the internal, subtle body. As propounded in the **Paraśurāmakalpa-Sūtra** (I.12) the tangible form of *brahman* is bliss and that bliss is made manifest in the body: *ānandaṃ brahmaṇorūpaṃ tacca dehe vyavasthitam, tasyābhivyañjakāḥ pañcamakārāḥ* ... Therefore, in whatever way and through whatever process this bliss is experienced – the creative endeavour may be dance, music, poetry, painting, sculpture or architecture – its experience is reflected in the body and all the limbs are charged with the experience. Besides, almost all the creative arts require a discipline of the physical body as well as of the internal, subtle and causal bodies. In fact, unless there is a complete and continuous harmonious interaction between these three bodies, no spiritual or quasi-spiritual, artistic experience can be fully realised. In the absence of such an effort towards harmony, whatever is received is a mere flash or just a glimpse. Thus, the physical body is in one way the starting point of such an experience and at the same time, it is also the end point, because all that is internally realised is made manifest in a tangible way in the body. All Indian art and creative activity is marked by balanced body gesture and fully developed movement. This is often misinterpreted as sensuous while it is not sensuous but sensate and vibrant with an inner control of the breath.

To conclude, art in the Indian tradition embodies a 're-creation' or 'redoing' of the process of creation at the macro-level and in that course it builds a bridge, as though, between the 'micro' and the 'macro'. All the components, whether it is *nāda* by itself or *śabda* (along with *artha*), or point and line, or bodily movement and static pose, or line and colour, are identified as primary stages in the process of creation at the cosmic level. The ideal is to reach that 'prime level' in the consciousness through the medium of one's respective art, and the 'body' is indispensable here; the form is indispensable for representing or re-creating the formless. The utmost concern is to keep body and soul inseparably intertwined (*yuganaddha*). The 'body' cannot live without the 'soul' and the 'soul' cannot function without the body.

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PRĀṆA

Overview

Prāṇa (m.), breath, the vibrative element, is the basis of life. So long as it continues life persists. In the **Caraka Saṃhitā** it is stated to be the element which holds the body, for this reason it has been named *dhārī*, *jīvitam*, and so on, which means the element that holds and enlivens. The germ of life which has been sown by the parents is the source of life. From the time of sowing of the seed it goes on pulsating and throbbing and later breathing. The beginning of life is not merely adding cells after cells or growing in bulk and strength, but the primary thing that is essential for the body is breathing. For this reason the Vedic seers used to call it *amṛta*, nectar.

The enlivening factor in the form of common seminal energy is the vitality which gives life to *prāṇa* to move along the middle path. When it becomes diffused it adds energy to all organs of the body so that they should function properly.

Both → *bīja*, the germ of life and *prāṇa*, the life-breath, are so co-related that we cannot separate the one from the other. It is *prāṇa* that makes the semen throb with life.

The most striking feature of *prāṇa* is that it links everything with us. It is the discovery that everything pulsating with life, is not something alien and distant but is close to us. This experience adds delight in the sea of unpleasant life.

The ancient seers could easily realize the fact that life was not only essential for mere existence but it was thought to be the nectar of existence. Therefore they prayed for the prolongation of life thus: *prāṇo mā paryāvṛto*, 'Thou *prāṇa*, never shalt be hid.'

In some Vedic texts *prāṇa*, the cosmic life-breath is thought to be the Lord of beings (Prajāpati) by whose blessings bounty and other essentials of human life are fulfilled.

Prāṇa, the life-breath or the vital energy, is the giver of life to all that we see with our eyes, the words we speak, and the beauty we enjoy. Everything becomes possible on account of the rhythmic play of *prāṇa*, the sacred altar of rituals, the chanting of Vedic hymns, the dance of artists and the songs of the musicians and even the restraining of the wilful movement of *prāṇa* in Yoga and placing it again on the right track, all these are the working of the vital force.

Basically, this vital force is one but it assumes manifold forms because of the

latent impression of living beings. This vibrative element has its origin in the void of the heart from which it stretches itself down to the rectal region on the one hand and on the other right up to the top of the head. As it passes and functions through different channels (*nāḍī*) of the body it has become differentiated and is thus known by different names.

Etymology

Prāṇa is derived from the root *pr-*, *prṇāti* and *piṇarti* meaning to fill, to nourish, to satiate, and is thus related to *pūrṇa*, fullness (related to Greek *pleto*, *pleroma*, Lat. *plere*, to fill, hence *plenus*, full). The term *prāṇa* is traditionally derived from the conjunction of *pra-an+ac*, (cf. *ānīdavātamaṁ svadhayā tadekam* – RV X.129.2) which means 'breathing forth' and *prāṇiti jīvati* means breathes properly and goes on living. The root *an-* 'to breathe' with the suffix *kviṇ* means one who breathes.

The etymology of the term has been shown in two ways: (i) functional (*kāryataḥ*) and (ii) by means of its effect (*phalataḥ*). By the first it means, *prakarṣeṇa nayanam prāṇayanam koṣṭhasya vāyoḥ bāhya dvādaśāntam yāvat yat prāpaṇam* – "Leading the air contained in the lungs outside to the extent of twelve digits from the centre of the body" (Nārāyaṇakaṇṭha comm. on MṛgĀ vp I.11. 22-23).

The second means: *phalataḥ yatajjīvanam nāma sa prāṇasyaiva vṛttiḥ* – "By means of its effect what is known as life is the result of the function of *prāṇa*."

While ascertaining the nature of *prāṇa* we find that the term has been used in two wide connotations – the one is abstract, and the other is its physical nature. In the physical aspect → *vāyu* (wind), *pavana*, *vāta*, etc. are synonymous, while in the abstract sense it means → *brahman*, the Supreme; *spanda*, pulsation; *bala*, strength; *ojas*, vitality; *udgītha*, the Sāman hymns; and *indriya*, (organs of senses).

Layers of Meaning

Though the views are divergent yet the primary meaning of *prāṇa* as the life-breath, the ever vibrative element, is common to all. Therefore all the other meanings are used only metaphorically.

We find from the derivative meaning of *prāṇa* that it signifies *prāṇana*, breathing where *prāṇa* is the agent. It is thought that as breathing is an activity, it requires an agent to make it active. For this reason the active principle that activates the life-breath to move on is *prāṇa*. In this sense *prāṇa* is thought of as

a sentient agent. Therefore in the Vedic and Upanisadic literatures *prāṇa* has been used in the above two aspects.

As *prāṇa* moves externally its movement has a certain limit after which it cannot move further, similarly as it comes back to the heart it does not stay there for long. It starts out again only to recede to its source. This process continues so long as the being lives. In the Veda and in the Upaniṣads the movement of *prāṇa* is considered to be similar to that of the sun. For this reason *prāṇa* is said to represent the external sun. It is also thought to represent *haṁsa*, the swan which moves along the space in its flight leaving behind what should be left (*hāna*) and accepting what should be acceptable (*samādāna*). While functioning in this way it makes an inaudible sound of *ham* and *saḥ*. But when this life-breath enters the middle channel of the body it becomes manifest like the ever-rising sun, the supreme effulgent form of consciousness. Therefore *prāṇa*, the cosmic life-breath, is of the nature of universal pulsation but in its specific form it is the particular life-breath of every living being. The core of the heart from which it has its source, is the centre from which, through numberless radii, every being is connected with everyone else.

Development of the Concept

In the Vedic-Upanisadic view, *prāṇa* as breath is the individual counterpart of the cosmic *vāyu* (wind), both being inseparable.

प्राणमाहुर्मतिरिश्वानं वातो ह प्राण उच्यते ।
प्राणे ह भूतं भव्यं च प्राणे सर्वं प्रतिष्ठितम् ॥

AV XI.4.15

The name of *prāṇa* is bestowed on *Mātariśvan* and on wind.

On *prāṇa*, past and future, yea on *prāṇa* everything depends.
(Tr. R.T.H. Griffith)

Life is most desirable to the Vedic seers. They acknowledged it as the nectar of existence:

यत ऐति मधुकशा रराणा तत् प्राणस्तदमृतं निविष्टम् ॥

AV IX.1.2cd

Whence comes the Honey-whip bestowing bounty, there Vital Spirit is, and *amṛta* Treasured. (Tr. R.T.H. Griffith)

Life-breath sweetens the existence, therefore the seers pray to the *Aśvins* so that they may allow bounty in their life.

Prāṇa is eulogised as:

प्राणाय नमो यस्य सर्वमिदं वशे ।
यो भूतः सर्वस्येश्वरो यस्मिन्त्सर्वं प्रतिष्ठितम् ॥

AV XI.4.1

Homage to *prāṇa*, him who hath dominion o'er the universe,
Who hath become the Sovran Lord of all, on whom the whole
depends! (Tr. R.T.H. Griffith)

The hymn (AV XI.4) is a glorification of *Prāṇa*, Breath, Vital Spirit, Life, regarded as a deity and apparently identified with Prajāpati, the Lord of Creation. *Prāṇa* is invested with the attributes of Parjanya, the god of the Rain-cloud.

Prāṇa was regarded by ancient seers as very dear and therefore they prayed to it for its blessings for life:

प्राण मा मत्पर्यावृतो न मदन्यो भविष्यसि ।
अपां गर्भमिव जीवसे प्राण बध्नामि त्वा मयि ॥

AV XI.4.26

Thou *prāṇa*, never shalt be hid, never shalt be estranged from me.
I bind thee on myself for life, O *prāṇa*, like the Water's germ.
(Tr. R.T.H. Griffith)

In the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, *prāṇa* has been defined thus:

यद् वै प्राणिति स प्राणः ।

ChUp I.3.3

That which breathes, is truly breath.

We find that the term *prāṇa* has been used in two senses, the one is its function, i.e. *prāṇana*, breathing and the other its agenthood, i.e. *prāṇa*, the agent of such activity. In the *Upaniṣads* *prāṇa* has been used in the above two senses:

प्राणन्नेव प्राणो नाम भवति ।

BrUp I.4.7

When breathing, he becomes breath (*prāṇa*) by name.

प्राणोऽस्मि प्रज्ञात्मा ... प्राण एवामृतम् ।

KauṣUp III.2

I am the breathing spirit (*prāṇa*), the intelligential self (*prajñātman*).
The breathing spirit, indeed, is immortality. (Tr. R.E. Hume)

In the narrow sense *prāṇa* denotes one of the vital airs of which five are usually distinguished, viz. *prāṇa*, *apāna*, *vyāna*, *udāna* and *samāna*, but often only two functions, *prāṇa* and *apāna*, or *prāṇa* and *vyāna*, or *prāṇa* and *udāna*, or three: *prāṇa*, *apāna* and *vyāna*, or *prāṇa*, *udāna* and *vyāna*, or sometimes four are mentioned. The *Aitareya Āraṇyaka* observes that the entire frame of the body likened to a wooden hut can remain steady because of the central beam of the hut which is life:

प्राणो वंश इति स्थविरः शाकल्यः । तद् यथा शालावंशे सर्वेऽन्ये वंशाः समाहिताः
स्युरेवमस्मिन् प्राणे चक्षुः श्रोत्रं मनो वागिन्द्रियाणि शरीरं सर्वं आत्मा समाहितः ।

AitĀr III.2.1

Sthavira Śākalya says that breath is a beam, and that as the other beams rest on the main beam of the house, the eye, the ear, the mind, the speech, the senses, the body, the whole self, rests on this breath.
(Tr. A.B. Keith)

In the *Jaiminiyopaniṣad Brāhmaṇa* *prāṇa* is said to be the Supreme *Brahman*:

अथ यः पुरुषः स प्राणस्तत् साम तद् ब्रह्म तदमृतम् ।

JaimUpBr I.26.4

Then He who is Puruṣa, is breath, it is Sāma, it is *Brahman*, it is ambrosia.

The same Upaniṣad goes on eulogizing the life-breath and points out its abode. It also describes its function as the activities of ten sense organs.

अथ प्राणमय ऊर्ध्वः प्रतिष्ठितः । स यः स प्राणो वायुः सः । स दशधा भवति । स एष
एतस्य रश्मिः प्राणो भूत्वा सर्वास्वासु प्रजासु प्रत्यवस्थितः । स यः कश्च प्राणित्येतस्यैव
रश्मिना प्राणिति ।

JaimUpBr I.29.1-2

The Supreme form of *prāṇa* is firmly established in the upper region. The one that breathes is the air. It becomes tenfold. That (air) is its ray. After assuming the form of life breath it is established in all beings (*prajāsu*). Then whoever breathes, it is by its ray that he breathes.

Prāṇa is a single entity but according to the meditative thought it becomes many:

स एष वशी दीप्ताग्र उद्गीथो यत्प्राणः । एष हीदं सर्वं वशे कुरुते ।

JaimUpBr II.4.1

The upgoing chanting of Sāman (*udgītha*) is the brilliant life breath, the ruler. He who knows this, everything comes under his control.

During the chanting of Sāma hymns the life-breath assumes the form of the song. The wise meditates on the singleness of *prāṇa* with concentration and chants the hymn. Only for him *prāṇa* is one.

स यदि ब्रूयादेकं म आगायेति प्राण उद्गीथ इति विद्वान् एकं मनसा ध्यायेत् । एको हि प्राणः । एको हास्याऽऽजायते ।

JaimUpBr II.6.1

If he says, chant one for me, then the wise with all concentration of mind meditates upon One [because] it is *prāṇa* the *udgītha* [nothing other than *oṅkāra*]. Since the vital force (*prāṇa*) is only One; [as a result] one is born unto him (the aspirant). (Tr. P. Ghosal)

In the **Maitrī Upaniṣad** it has been described how Prajāpati was alone in the beginning. He then, by meditating upon himself (*ātmānam*), created numerous offsprings. He saw them inanimate and lifeless, like a stone. He had no enjoyment. He then thought to himself: 'Let me enter within, in order to animate (*pratibodhanāya*) them.'

He made himself like wind and sought to enter within. As one he was unable.

स पंचधाऽऽत्मानं विभज्योच्यते यः प्राणोऽपानः समान उदानो व्यान इति ।

MaitUp II.6

So he divided himself fivefold – he who is spoken of as the *Prāṇa* breath, the *Apāna* breath, the *Samāna* breath, the *Udāna* breath, the *Vyāna* breath. (Tr. R.E. Hume)

Prāṇa, the life-spirit, has been seen in two aspects, the one is inner and the other is outer. He, the soul, bears himself as *prāṇa* and the sun.

द्विधा वा एष आत्मानं विभर्ति अयं यः प्राणो यश्चासा आदित्यः । अथ द्वौ वा एता अस्य पन्थाना अन्तर्बहिश्च । अहोरात्रेणैतौ व्यावर्तेते । असौ वा आदित्यो बहिरात्मा । अन्तरात्मा प्राणः ।

MaitUp VI.1

He (i.e. the Soul, *Ātman*) bears himself (*ātmānam*) twofold: as the breathing spirit (*prāṇa*) here, and as yon sun (*āditya*). Likewise, two in number, verily, are these his paths: an inner and an outer. Both these return upon themselves with a day and a night. Yon sun, verily, is the outer Soul (*Ātman*). The inner Soul (*Ātman*) is the breathing spirit. (Tr. R.E. Hume)

The seeker of Truth tries to identify the life-breath with the visible sun: *sūrya ātmā jagatastasthuṣaśca*– 'The sun is the soul of the universe, both mobile and immobile' (RV I.115.1). The seers held a realistic view regarding the nature of

the life-breath, for they knew that so long as it lasts in the body, the body survives. The **Kauṣītaki Upaniṣad** states frankly:

प्राण एवामृतम् । यावद्ध्यस्मिन्शरीरे प्राणो वसति तावदायुः ।

KauṣUp III.2

The breathing spirit, indeed is immortality. For, as long as the breathing spirit remains in this body, so long is there life.

(Tr. R.E. Hume)

Bhṛgu, an Upanisadic saint, at one stage of progressive learning conceives *prāṇa* as *brahman*:

प्राणो ब्रह्मेति व्यजानात् । प्राणाद्ध्येव खल्विमानि भूतानि जायन्ते । प्राणेन जातानि जीवन्ति । प्राणं प्रयन्त्यभिसंविशन्ति ।

TUp III.3

He understood that Brahma is breath (*prāṇa*). For truly, indeed, beings here are born from breath; when born they live by breath, on deceasing they enter into breath. (Based on the tr. by R.E. Hume)

Sometimes *prāṇa* is meditated upon as *brahman* but sometimes it is seen as the source of activity of the senses.

सप्त प्राणाः प्रभवन्ति तस्मात् सप्तार्चिषः समिधः सप्त होमाः ।

सप्त इमे लोका येषु चरन्ति प्राणा गुहाशया निहिताः सप्त सप्त ॥

MuṇḍUp II.1.8

From Him (the divine, formless *puruṣa*) come forth the seven life-breaths (*prāṇa*),

The seven flames, their fuel, the seven oblations,

These seven worlds, wherein do move

The life-breaths that dwell in the secret place (of the heart) placed seven and seven. (Tr. R.E. Hume)

These seven *prāṇas* are the seven organs of sense in the head (i.e. two eyes, two ears, two nostrils and the mouth).

The all-inclusive *brahman* is manifest yet hidden. It is *prāṇa* which moves and winks (*prāṇan nimiṣacca*, MuṇḍUp II.2.1). It further states: it is life (*prāṇa*), and it is speech and mind.

Though *brahman* is imperceptible, yet It shines as *prāṇa* in every living being.

प्राणो ह्येष यः सर्वभूतैर्विभाति ।

MuṇḍUp III.1.4a

Truly, it is life that shines forth in all things. (Tr. R.E. Hume)

Prāṇa is again equated with the three creative utterances, viz. *bhūr*, *bhuvar* and *sva*.

भूरिति वै प्राणः । भुव इत्यपानः । सुवरिति व्यानः ।

TUp I.5

Bhūr, verily, is the in-breath (*prāṇa*); *Bhuvar*, the outbreath (*apāna*), *Suvar*, the diffused. (Tr. R.E. Hume)

The above Upaniṣad analyses the universe in a fivefold way. With regard to material existence (*adhibhūta*) fire, wind, sun, moon and others come under *adhidaiva*, while the fivefold *prāṇa* comes under the category of *adhyātma*, i.e. self.

At one phase of realization regarding *brahman* the seers understood that food is essential for existence and the maintenance of life. They thought that only from food creatures are produced, therefore food is the chief of beings, hence food is worshipped as *brahman*, but soon they understood that food is not the real *brahman* but Breath, the life of all beings, is *brahman*.

प्राणं देवा अनुप्राणन्ति मनुष्याः पशवश्च ये ।

प्राणो हि भूतानामायुस्तस्मात् सर्वायुषमुच्यते ॥

TUp II.3.3

The gods do breathe along with breath (*prāṇa*), as also men and beasts. For truly, breath is the life (*āyus*) of beings. Therefore it is called the Life-of-all (*sarvāyusa*). (Tr. R.E. Hume)

Prāṇa is not only the vital force of human and animal world but also it has been associated with the sun as the life of the universe.

प्राणः प्रजानामुदयत्येष सूर्यः ॥

MaitUp VI.8cd

Yon sun arises as the life of creatures. (Tr. R.E. Hume)

Prāṇa is to be meditated upon as the sacred fire thus:

प्राणो वै वायुः । प्राणोऽग्निः । तस्येमा इष्टका यः प्राणोऽपानो व्यानः समान उदानः । स शिरःपक्षसीपृष्ठपुच्छवानेषोऽग्निः पुरुषविधः । तदिदमन्तरिक्षं प्रजापतेर्द्वितीया चितिः ।

MaitUp VI.33

Verily, the wind is breath. Verily, breath (*prāṇa*) is a sacrificial fire (i.e. the second, the *dakṣiṇa* fire). For that the bricks are these: the *prāṇa* breath, the *vyāna* breath, the *apāna* breath, the *samāna* breath, the *udāna* breath. So it has a head, two wings, a back, and a tail. In

the case of one who knows the Person this sacrificial fire is the atmosphere, Prajāpati's second sacrificial pile. (Tr. R.E. Hume)

The real soul of the individual and of the world is the Supreme. *Prāṇa* and *apāna* are the means to attain Him, the Lord. The whole world which is pulsating is moving in life. It is not something inert like a lifeless stone. The very being is *prāṇa* which moves along shaping itself in numerous forms.

यदिदं किं च जगत् सर्वं प्राण एजति निःसृतम् ।

KāthUp VI.2ab

This whole world, whatever there is,
Was created from and moves in Life. (Tr. R.E. Hume)

While knowing the truth the seer speaks again:

न प्राणेन नापानेन मर्त्यो जीवति कश्चन ।

इतरेण तु जीवन्ति यस्मिन्नेतावुपाश्रितौ ॥

KāthUp V.5

Not by the out-breath (*prāṇa*) and the in-breath (*apāna*)

Doth any mortal whatsoever live.

But by another do men live –

Even that whereon both these depend. (Tr. R.E. Hume)

Prāṇa and *apāna* are only the marks of life functions. They are the signs of animal life but real life begins when one becomes aware of the one (the Spirit) who abiding in the middle, leads one upwards and casts downward, the functions of *prāṇa* and *apāna*.

ऊर्ध्वं प्राणमुन्नयत्यपानं प्रत्यगस्यति ।

मध्ये वामनमासीनं विश्वे देवा उपासते ॥

KāthUp V.3

Upwards the out-breath (*prāṇa*) he leadeth.

The in-breath (*apāna*) inwards he casts.

The dwarf who is seated in the middle

All the gods (*deva*) reverence! (Tr. R.E. Hume)

Prāṇa is *brahman*. It is an all-conditioning, yet inscrutable agent. This idea has been referred to in the following Upaniṣad:

यत्प्राणेन न प्राणिति येन प्राणः प्रणीयते ।

तदेव ब्रह्म त्वं विद्धि ॥

KeUp I.9

That which one breathes (*prāṇiti*) not with breathing (*prāṇa*, breath),
That with which breathing (*prāṇa*) is conducted (*prāṇīyate*) –
That indeed is known as *Brahma*. (Tr. R.E. Hume)

Sometimes *prāṇa* is designated as the knower of the body, or limited consciousness (*kṣetrājña*).

शरीरमिन्द्रियैर्युक्तं क्षेत्रमित्यभिधीयते ।
वेद तत्प्राण एवैकस्तस्मात् क्षेत्रज्ञ उच्यते ॥

BrDev IV.40

The body joined with the organs of sense is designated as *kṣetra*.
Prāṇa alone knows it, hence he (*prāṇa*) is spoken of as 'he who knows
the body' (*kṣetrājña*). (Tr. A.A. Macdonell)

Prāṇa and →*vāc* are mutually related. It is by the aid of the vital energy that
speech becomes manifest. Like the upholders of Āgamas, the Vedic seers also
accept the view that speech, particularly *vaikhari* (external speech), emerges due
to the modifications of *prāṇa* in the body (*prāṇavṛttinivandhana*).

मातापुत्रौ तु वाक् प्राणौ माता वागितरः सुतः ।
सरस्वन्तमिति प्राणो वाचं प्राहुः सरस्वतीम् ॥

BrDev IV.39

Now, mother and son are *vāc* (speech) and *prāṇa* (breath) the
mother is *vāc*, the son is the other (*prāṇa*). *Prāṇa* is (meant by)
sarasvat, while *vāc* they call *Sarasvatī*. (Tr. A.A. Macdonell)

Prāṇa is the supreme ruler of four kinds of beings and designated as *Indra*:

चतुर्विधानां भूतानां प्राणो भूत्वा व्यवस्थितः ।
इष्टे चैवास्य सर्वस्य तेनेन्द्र इति स स्मृतः ॥

BrDev II.35

And having become established (source of) life of the four kinds of
beings, he rules (*iṣṭe*) over this universe; therefore he has been
named *Indra*. (Tr. A.A. Macdonell)

Prāṇa is one of the *pañcajanas*:

चक्षुः श्रोत्रं मनो वाक् च प्राणश्चेत्यात्मवादिनः ।

BrDev VII.71ab

Eye, ear, mind, speech, and breath, say the theosophists (*ātmavādin*).
(Tr. A.A. Macdonell)

In Ayurvedic texts like the *Caraka* and the *Suśruta Saṁhitā* *prāṇa* is consid-

ered as a form of → *vāyu*. It is said to be life, strength and the sustainer of creatures (*vāyurāyurublaṃ vāyurdhātā śarīriṇām*, CarSam CiSthā XXVIII.3). It further states:

वायुस्तंत्रयंत्रधरः । प्राणोदानसमानव्यानापानात्मा । प्रवर्तकश्चेष्टानामुच्चावचानां, नियन्ता
प्रणेता च मनसः, सर्वेन्द्रियाणामुद्योजकः, सर्वेन्द्रियार्थानामभिवोढा, सर्वशरीरधातुव्यूहकरः,
सन्धानकरः शरीरस्य, प्रवर्तको वाचः, प्रकृतिः स्पर्शशब्दयोः, श्रोत्रस्पर्शनयोर्मूलं,
हर्षोत्साहयोर्योनिः, समीरणोऽग्नेः, दोषसंशोषणः, क्षेप्ता बहिर्मलानां, स्थूलाणुस्रोतसां
भेत्ता, कर्ता गर्भाकृतीनाम्, आयुषोऽनुवृत्तिप्रत्ययभूतो भवति ।

CarSam SūSthā XII.8

The wind is the support of the body-machine. It is of the characteristic of *prāṇa*, *udāna*, *samāna*, *vyāna* and *apāna*. It is the impelling force of efforts – good or bad. It controls and guides the mind, co-ordinates all sense-organs and supports them. It arranges all essential ingredients of the body, holds the body-machine well-fastened, sets speech in motion. It is the source of touch and sound, is the root of the organs of hearing and touch, the cause of joy and zeal, the promoter of fire, dries up impure elements, ejects impure matters outside of the body the agent to shape the form of the embryo. It becomes the cause of the idea of the continuity of life.

The above texts describe *prāṇa* in both its aspects: as the Supreme (*svayambhū*, *bhagavān*, *sarvātmā*) and its functional forms as *vyaktakarmā*, *gatimat*, an agent of perceptible activity and possessed of mobility.

Prāṇa, as the vital air, functions in the body in such a way that it may persist and continue its existence without any hindrance. The vital air keeps the body sentient, so that even if a person goes to sleep or falls into a swoon the activity of exhaling and inhaling does not cease. In the narrow sense the vital air is indicated by the term *prāṇa* but when it is considered broadly, as Suśruta did, that *prāṇa* is neither the vital air, nor air itself, but the very energy that activates the elements abiding in the body.

अग्निः सोमो वायुः सत्त्वं रजस्तमः पंचेन्द्रियाणि भूतात्मेति प्राणाः ।

SuSam ŚāSthā IV.3

The *pittam* (fiery or thermogenic) and *śleṣmā*, (the lunar principle of the body), the bodily *vāyu*, the three primary qualities of *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* (adhesion, cohesion and disintegration), the five sense organs, and the self (*karma-puruṣa*) are the preserver of the life of the foetus. (Tr. K.L. Bhishagratna)

The commentator Dalhaṇa adds a note here. He says that the above twelve elements beginning with *agni* and *soma* are essential for the body to survive,

therefore the above twelve factors as they enliven the body (*prāṇayanti jīvayantīti prāṇāḥ*), are called the vital energy.

Suśruta was aware that when this vital energy assumes or transforms itself as three vital airs (*pavana*), viz. *prāṇa*, *apāna* and *samāna*, it abides in the body and does its respective functions.

ध्यायते पाल्यते चापि स्वां स्वां गतिमवस्थितैः ॥

SuSam SūSthā XXXV.28cd

The heat of the body is maintained, and it is subsisted (by the three) moving steadily in their respective abode. (Tr. K.L. Bhishagratna)

Prāṇa alone controls the living being and leads it to a different existence after death.

यथा स्वेनात्मनाऽऽत्मानं सर्वः सर्वासु योनिषु ।

प्राणैस्तन्त्रयते प्राणी नह्यन्योऽस्त्यस्य तन्त्रकः ॥

CarSam ŚāSthā I.77

Only the self leads itself to all the species of life, none else is its master, in the same way all beings are attached to different species by means of the vital energy and none else is there to control it. (Tr. P.V. Sharma)

The locations of the vital energy in the body are stated to be ten, they are:

दशैवायतनान्याहुः प्राणा येषु प्रतिष्ठिताः ।

शंखौ मर्मत्रयं कण्ठो रक्तं शुक्रौजसी गुदम् ॥

CarSam SūSthā XXIX.3

There are only ten seats where vital breath is located, such as two temples, three vital organs (heart, bladder and head), throat, blood, semen, ojas and anorectal region. (Tr. P.V. Sharma)

The body keeps a normal heat. The main cause of this heat is the vital energy or *prāṇa*.

ओजस्तेजोऽग्नयः प्राणाश्चोक्ता देहाग्निहेतुकाः ॥

CarSam CiSthā XV.3cd

... immunity, energy, heat processes and vital breath – all these depend on body fire. (Tr. P.V. Sharma)

Suśruta takes *prāṇa* as one of the three primary elements, viz. *vāyu*, *pitta* and *kapha*. *Prāṇa* is included under *vāyu*. The *vāyu* is imperceptible but on proper investigation its function can be known. This *vāyu* can be known by names,

locations, and functions (*nāma sthāna karmabhiḥ*), therefore from difference of names and locations and its activity the one single *vāyu* becomes five and is known as *prāṇa* etc.

प्राणोदानौ समानश्च व्यानश्चापान एव च ।

स्थानस्था मारुताः पंच यापयन्ति शरीरिणम् ॥

SuSam NiSthā I.12

The bodily *vāyu* is classified as *prāṇa*, *udāna*, *samāna*, *vyāna* and *apāna*. These five classes of *vāyu*, located in their specific region, contribute towards the integration and maintenance of the body.
(Tr. K.L. Bhishagratna)

Caraka holds the same view adding that these *vāyus* control the entire body by dividing itself into five. When they function properly the body remains free from illness. Among the five the specific *prāṇa* has some particular locations. They are:

स्थानं प्राणस्य मूर्धोरः कण्ठजिह्वास्य नासिकाः ।

CarSam CiSthā XXVIII.6ab

Prāṇa is located in the head, chest, throat, tongue, mouth and nose.
(Tr. P.V. Sharma)

Movement of *prāṇa* is the sign by which the life of the body can be ascertained:

प्राणापानौ निमेषाद्या जीवनं मनसो गतिः । ... लिङ्गानि परमात्मनः ॥

CarSam ŚāSthā I.70ab, 72d

Inspiration and expiration (respiration), twinkling of the eye, etc. (reflexes), biological functions, psychic movements – these are the signs of the self. (Tr. P.V. Sharma)

Prāṇa flows along a current or channel:

तत्र प्राणवहानां स्रोतसां हृदयं मूलं महास्रोतश्च ।

CarSam ViSthā V.8

The channels carrying the vital energy, have their origin in the heart and the greater channels.

Prāṇa has been dealt with in the context of speech in the commentary of Vṛṣabhadeva on Bhartṛhari's *Vākyapadiya*:

प्राणापानान्तरे नित्यमेका सर्वस्य तिष्ठति ॥

अन्या त्वप्रेर्यमाणैव विना प्राणेन वर्तते ।

जायते हि ततः प्राणो वाच्यमाप्याययन् पुनः ॥

प्राणेनाप्यायिता सेयं व्यवहारनिबन्धना ।

Paddhati comm. under Vāk I.134

The one, the single eternal (speech) abides in the gap between *prāṇa* and *apāna* of all, while the other (*paśyantī*) remains existing without being impelled by *prāṇa*. From there *prāṇa* gains its existence then again it nourishes the speech (*vaikharī*), for this reason this very *prāṇa* is said to be the nourisher of speech and becomes the cause of worldly transaction.

स्थानेषु विधृते वायौ कृतवर्णपरिग्रहा ।

वैखरी वाक् प्रयोक्तृणां प्राणवृत्तिनिबन्धना ॥

केवलं बुद्ध्युपादाना क्रमरूपानुपातिनी ।

प्राणवृत्तिमतिक्रम्य मध्यमा वाक् प्रवर्तते ॥

Paddhati comm. under Vāk I.134

The wind being restrained in different locations of the body the speech named *vaikharī* assumes different syllabic forms following the modality of the vital air of those persons who utilize them.

While *madhyamā* born of *buddhi* (intellect), follows the order of sequence but even then transcending the modality of the wind it goes on functioning.

We find that *vaikharī* as audible speech solely depends on the movement of the vital air (*prāṇa*) inside the body. While the wind moves onward it strikes against the walls of the throat, palate, lips, the root of the tongue and other places of the mouth and as a result gives birth to various sounds. These sounds or speech are, in general, the working of *prāṇa*.

In Tantra and Āgama literature, we find references to *prāṇa* and its various meanings.

The **Svacchanda Tantra** gives the idea of *prāṇa* in a clear perspective:

प्राणापानमयः प्राणो विसर्गापूरणं प्रति ।

SvT VII.25ab

Prāṇa in its generic aspect consists of both *prāṇa* and *apāna*. It functions as exhalation (*visarga*) and inhalation (*āpūraṇa*).

Kṣemarāja explains the above verse thus: *prāṇa*, in its supreme nature, has the characteristic of reflecting in its mirror the entire *vācya* and *vācaka* form of the universe as one undifferentiated unity with oneself. But in its limited nature it functions through the body of the living being. It goes outside the body along the hollow channel for the purpose of creation and manifestation, and in its return

journey it draws them back within.

The above Tantra further states that *prāṇa* is located in the heart, and it reflects the etymological meaning of 'filling':

नित्यमापूरयन्नेव प्राणिनामुरसि स्थितः ॥

प्राणनं कुरुते यस्मात् तस्मात् प्राणः प्रकीर्तितः ।

SvT VII.25cd-26ab

Being established in the heart of the living beings, it goes on filling up continuously (the being as well as the object). As it vivifies (the being and the object by means of exhaling and inhaling) it is called *prāṇa*.

Prāṇa as explained by Abhinavagupta is as follows:

अन् देहाद्यन्तर्गतैव भिन्नभिन्न शक्त्याद्यहन्ताशून्यप्राया जीवनाख्या वृत्तिः, यः शून्यप्रमाता इति अभिहितः ।

PTrīVi on verse 1 (p. 9)

'An' from the root 'an' to 'breathe' with the suffix 'kviṣ' means one who breathes. Thus 'an' means *aṇu* or the empirical individual whose life consists in breath and who considers his gross body (*deha*) or the subtle body (*puruṣaṣṭaka*) etc., i.e. *prāṇa* as the self. Similarly *ananam* may mean life (*prāṇanam*), existing in the body, etc., consisting of different powers devoid of I-consciousness as in the case of one who is known as *śūnyaṣṭamātā*. (Tr. J. Singh)

The text further elucidates the above matter thus:

जडाजडभरिते जगति जडैः जीवदेकमग्रैः स्थीयते । जीवतां च जीवनं नाम प्रागुक्तं ज्ञानक्रियारूपमेकं पारमैश्वर्यं सर्वेषां परत्रापि हि स्ववत् । देहादिरेव पृथक्तया भाति । यत् पुनः प्राणनं तद् अभेदेनैव स्वप्रकाशम्, एतदेव च परमार्थः ।

PTrīVi on verse 1 (p. 9)

In this world full of sentient and insentient existents, the non-sentient ones exist because of their dependence on sentient ones. The life of all living beings consists indeed in the divine powers of knowledge and activity. In the case of other experiments also (*paratra*) as in one's own, only the bodies appear as different. And that which is life (*prāṇana*) appears in every one without any distinction whether he is *dehaṣṭamātā* etc. This is the highest truth. (Based on the tr. by J. Singh)

In the above passage *prāṇana* is non-dual consciousness which makes a unity

of all and integrates everything into one.

According to Kāśmīra Śivādvaya view, *prāṇa*, the vital energy, is considered to be the base of six paths, known as *ṣaḍadhvā*. These six shine as *varṇa*, *mantra*, *pada* on one side and *kalā*, *tattva* and *bhuvana* on the other. They are manifest in two distinct ways, the one shines as the signifier (*vācaka*) and the other as the thing signified (*vācya*).

Consciousness is indeed and essentially free from all limitations, but on account of self-imposed limitations it shines as the consciousness of the void (*śūnyapramātā*). This state is the transcendent nature of pure consciousness.

But soon in this transcendent subject of the void, because of the presence of innate impurity (*āṇavamalayogāt*), creative upsurge occurs so that it may be able to embrace those objects which had previously been abandoned. The following verse from the **Tantrāloka** shows how *saṃvit*, pure consciousness, after passing through or assuming the nature of the void (*śūnya*) becomes *prāṇa*:

स एव खात्मा मेयेऽस्मिन् भेदिते स्वीक्रियोन्मुखः ।

पतन्समुच्छलत्वेन प्राणस्पन्दोर्मिसंज्ञितः ॥

TĀI VI.11

That very subject of the void being intent on embracing the knowables (like blue and pleasure) which had been made separate (*prthakṛte*) from its own self (before), feels a desire for them (*apūrṇaṃ manyatā yogāt sākāṅkṣatayā*) because of its association of non-perfection and being desirous of and falls with an upsurge, that is, becomes externally inclined. For this reason it is known as *prāṇa* (vital energy), *spanda*, (pulsation/vibration) and *ūrmi* (wave).

It should be borne in mind that this *prāṇa* is the primary extension (*ādyaprasāra*) of *vimarśa* characterized by slight vibration (*svavimarśa rūpasya spandanasya*). *Spanda* and *ūrmi* are the terms used to mean *prāṇa* only metaphorically, because before the rise of *prāṇa* as the vital air and before the manifestation of the subject of the void (*śūnyapramātā*) *spanda* remains present. This is known as *prāṇaśakti*, the energy of the life force.

इयं सा प्राणनाशक्तिरान्तरोद्योगदोहदा ।

स्पन्दः स्फुरत्ता विश्रान्तिर्जीवो हृत् प्रतिभा मता ॥

TĀI VI.13

This very vital energy keenly desirous of or longing for (*dohada*) catching hold of the internal stir of the nature of intentness (*udyantṛtātma*) is known as *spanda* (vibration), *sphurattā* (stir), *viśrānti* (rest), *jīva* (life), *hṛt* (heart) and *pratibhā*.

The vital energy (vibrative by nature) takes two forms of mode, the first being the base of the other, the former is *sāmānya parisṇandātmā* characterized by universal vibration, the base of the five formed modes of the five specific functions.

This activity of the vital energy of vibrative nature makes the body as its own by means of its specific modes of *prāṇa*, *apāna* and others, then the body becomes filled with consciousness.

In accordance with the Upaniṣads, Abhinavagupta in his **Tantrāloka** states that the vital energy is basically one but it assumes the five specific modes, viz. *prāṇa*, *apāna*, *samāna*, *udāna* and *vyāna*.

Prāṇa extends itself to the extent of twelve digits outside the body and comes back again to the centre of the heart from where it has begun. This movement of *prāṇa* is known as inhaling and exhaling, *prāṇa* and *apāna*.

The **Śāradā-Tilaka** states:

देहं व्याप्य स्वनाडीभिः प्रयाणं कुरुते बहिः ॥

द्वादशांगुलमानेन तस्मात् प्राण इतीरितः ।

ŚāTil XXV.37cd-38ab

Pervading the body with all its channels (*nāḍī*), it (*prāṇa*) goes outside to the extent of twelve digits, therefore it is called *prāṇa*, the vital energy.

It functions as the life-force in three distinct ways, viz. inspiration, expiration, and stoppage automatically. The idea of controlling *prāṇa* by means of expiration (*pracchardana*) and retention of breath (*vidhāraṇa*) was supposed to be an aid for the purpose of increasing longevity.

It has also been stated in the **Viṣṇu Purāṇa** that *prāṇa* is born from the internal channels of Lord Viṣṇu.

प्राणोऽन्तः सुषिराद् जातः ।

ViPur I.12.63a

The vital airs (sprang) from thy central vein. (Tr. H.H. Wilson)

Śabara also knew that the body does not inhale but it is something other than the body that inhales.

प्राणादयः शरीरगुणविधर्माणः ।

MīmSūBh I.1.5 (p. 76)

The nature of inspiration and expiration is different from that of bodily attributes. (Tr. R.S. Bhattacharya)

But the **Tantrāloka** makes a distinction of different movements of the body and its limbs.

The question regarding *prāṇaspanda*, how the vibration of *prāṇa* occurs, remains unresolved, therefore it is stated:

प्रभोः शिवस्य या शक्तिर्वामा ज्येष्ठा च रौद्रिका ।

सतदन्यतमावात्मप्राणौ यत्नविधायिनौ ॥

प्राणशक्तिः क्वचित्प्राणचारे हार्दे यथा स्फुटम् ।

TĀI VI.52, 54ab

The power belonging to Śiva are *vāmā*, *jyēṣṭhā* and *raudrī* being associated with one of them the self and the vital energy joined together are the cause to render vibration to the vital air. ...

The power in the form of *prāṇa* is the predominant agent regarding the movement of *prāṇa* in the heart.

The *yogin* makes the best use of the modalities of *prāṇa* for the attainment of full blossoming of the Self. *Prāṇana*, vivifying is the salient feature of the *anuttara* air. When it remains in the heart as non-different from the knowing subject, it should be meditated upon as the void free from the trace of any delight. At that state *prāṇa* remains merged in the void. But a little later *prāṇa* starts to vibrate and accepts the objects. The *yogin* experiences different levels of developed delight at the state of *samāna*, *udāna* and *vyāna*.

It is the heart, the abode of *prāṇa*, which is the main agent for its vibrative movement.

The **Śiva-Sūtra** states how *prāṇa* becomes related with the body.

नैसर्गिकः प्राणसम्बन्धः ॥

ŚSū III.43

The link of the universal life-force (with the body) is natural.
(Tr. J. Singh)

Kṣemarāja explains what this natural link means:

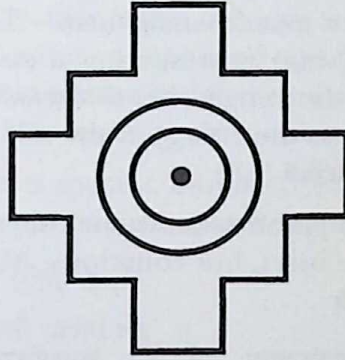
निसर्गात् स्वातन्त्र्यात्मनः स्वभावात् आयातो नैसर्गिकः, प्राणसम्बन्धः । संवित् किल भगवती विश्ववैचित्र्यम् अवविभासयिषुः संकोचावभासपूर्वकं संकुचदशेषविश्व-स्फुरत्तात्मकप्राणनारूपग्राहकभूमिकां श्रित्वा ग्राह्यरूपजगदाभासात्मना स्फुरतीति नैसर्गिकः, स्वातन्त्र्यात् प्रथममुद्भासितोऽस्याः प्राणसम्बन्धः ।

ŚSūVim III.43

Naisargika means that which has come from *nisarga*, i.e. from nature, in other words from the power of Absolute Free Will of the Lord

(*Svātantrya Śakti*). (The link of *prāṇa* with the body is, therefore, unavoidable.) The divine consciousness, with a desire to display the variegated panorama of the universe, at first adopts the principle of contraction (*saṅkocāvabhāsa*), assumes the state of limited experiment (*jīvas*) who are a form of *prāṇana*, the universal life-force which brings about the manifestation of the entire universe in a limited form and also appears in the form of the world as *grāhya* or object. This link of *prāṇa*, therefore, has been initially brought into manifestation by the Free Will of the Lord. (Tr. J. Singh)

The vital life-force is the external manifestation of Śakti which again is linked with Śiva. The following diagram which is the central part of many ritual *yantras* will help to understand the idea:



1. The centre is the *vimarśa śakti* (reflective energy of consciousness)
2. The first circle is *saṁvit* (pure consciousness)
3. The second is *prāṇa*
4. The square is the external world.

This diagram also illustrates the oft-quoted statement by the early Śivādvaya thinker Kallaṭa: *prāk saṁvit prāṇe pariṇatā*, 'consciousness in its first creative upsurge manifests itself as *prāṇa*' (original text lost). *Prāṇa* so to say mediates between Consciousness and the external manifestation in space and time. *Prāṇa* is essentially of the nature of all-pervading pulsation, functioning internally as well as externally. In the context of ritual, its external forms are enumerated by Abhinavagupta (TĀI VI.2-4ab) as being present in eleven elements and instruments of ritual: *maṇḍala*, *sthaṇḍila*, *pātra*, *akṣasūtra*, *pustaka*, *liṅga*, *tūra*, *paṭa*, *pusta*, *pratimā* and *mūrti*. The vital energy which is continuously active in the living body is not directly perceived in inert objects, therefore these are to be instilled with life (*prāṇana*) from the very source of pulsative energy (*spanda*). This is

performed by means of installation or *prāṇapraṭiṣṭhā*, in which *prāṇa* is passed on from the worshipper to the image or object like a lamp lit from another lamp. With this process, all the objects used in ritual and the image itself become filled with vibrative energy.

Prāṇa is also called the flame of the internal fire (*śikhā*). It has been stated in the **Trīśīrasi Tantra** as quoted by Abhinavagupta in the **Tantrāloka**:

प्राण एव शिखा ॥

TĀI VI.22c

It is *prāṇa* which is the flame.

Abhinavagupta elucidates the idea how *saṃvit*, consciousness in the form of the knowing subject of the void descends with a downward surge and as a result assumes the body of the object. Then it shows itself as *prāṇa*, the essence of which is vibrative by nature (*prāṇa spandormisaṃjñitaḥ* – TĀI VI.11). It abides in the middle path (*madhyamasopāna*) representing a staircase which leads one to ascertain what the reality of the thing is (*bhāvānām tathāṭva niścaya rūpaṃ siddhim*). In other words, it is known as the energy of the self (*ātmabala*) which has been indicated in the **Spanda-Kārikā** (I.8).

As *saṃvit*, consciousness, itself assumes the role of *prāṇa*, therefore, it is not proper to consider it to be inert, but conscious. Abhinavagupta affirms in his **Vivaraṇa** on the **Parātrīśikā**:

तथा हि सर्वेषामन्तर्बिष्करणानां यत् यत् अनुप्रविशति तत्तत् मध्यनाडीभुवि
सर्वाङ्गानुप्राणनसारायां प्राणात्मना चेतनरूपेण आस्ते यत् ओज इति कथ्यते । तदेव
सर्वाङ्गेषु अनुप्राणकतया तदविभक्तवीर्यरूपत्वेन ततोऽपि पुनरपि नयनश्रवणादि इन्द्रियद्वारेण
बृंहकरूपं रूपशब्दादि अनुप्रविशत् बृंहकत्वादेव तत् वीर्यक्षोभरूपकामानलप्रबोधकं
भवति ।

PTrīVi on verse 1 p. 15

Now, whatever enters the inner psychic apparatus or the inner and outer senses of all beings that abides as sentient life energy in the middle channel, i.e. *suṣumnā*, whose main characteristic is to enliven all parts of the body. That life-energy is said to be '*ojas*', (vital lustre), that is then diffused as an enlivening factor in the form of common seminal energy (*vīrya*) of all parts of the body. Then when an exciting visual or auditory perception enters the percipient, then on account of its exciting power, it fans the flame of passion in the form of the agitation of the seminal energy. (Tr. J. Singh)

Prāṇa is the genus of all five specific forms known as *prāṇa*, *apāna* and others.

The essential nature of it, is *prāṇana*, that is to make others enliven. Abhinavagupta clarifies the relationship between this vital force and sexual energy in his *Tantrāloka* thus:

कामस्य पूर्णता तत्त्वं संघट्टे प्रविभाव्यते ।
विषस्य चामृतं तत्त्वं छाद्यत्वेऽणोश्च्युतेसति ॥

TĀI III.170

Perfection is the essential nature of sexual desire (*kāma*) which is thought of fulfilled in the balanced unity (of the two) and the essential nature of pervasiveness is the ambrosia. It is realised only when the veil of limitations of the limited soul falls off.

The essential nature of desire is the fulfillment of all desires – it means rest in the self and non-longing for anything else, i.e. non-dependence (*ananyākāṅkṣitā*). Similarly the reality of *viṣa* is freedom from all sorts of limitations. This is the real nature of *kāma* and *viṣa*. These are their generic forms but the specific form of *kāma* is *prāṇa* and that of *viṣa* is *apāna*, therefore they have the syllabic forms *ha* and *saḥ*, respectively.

To a *yogī*, *prāṇa* assumes specific importance. A *yogī* remains wherever he likes. He does not wander about visiting sacred spots, for he knows:

पर्वताग्रं नदीतीरमेकलिङ्गं तदेव च ।
किं वातिबहुना सर्वं संवित्तौ प्राणं ततः ॥
ततो देहस्थितम् ।

TĀI XV.96–97a

The hill-top, the river bank, Śiva's *liṅga* where no other *liṅga* is found near, what is the need of saying more, everything has its place in consciousness, then in *prāṇa*, then in the body itself.

The *yogī* makes an effort to equalize the movement of *prāṇa*.

प्राणदण्डप्रयोगेन पूर्वापरसमीकृतेः ॥
चतुष्किकाम्बुजालम्बि लम्बिकासौधमाश्रयेत् ।
त्रिशूलभूमिं क्रान्त्वातो नाडित्रितयसंगताम् ॥
इच्छाज्ञानक्रियाशक्तिसमत्वे प्रविशेत् सुधीः ।

TĀI V.54cd–56ab

The *yogī* should first of all by means of contraction and expansion of *mattagandha*, i.e. the rectum equalize the opposing movements of *prāṇa* and *apāna*. Then he takes resort to the joint of the two eyebrows being of the nature of cross-road representing a lotus

(*vidyākamala*) from where he proceeds further and crossing the level of the trident where the three channels meet he tries to enter the stage of the equilibrium of will, knowledge and activity.

The final aim of the *yogī* is preceded by his effort of straightening the *prāṇa*. In the mystic language the procedure is known as an application of the rod by which the wandering of the life-breath along the zigzag course (called *kuṭilavāhinī*) is stopped, with the result that it begins to move straight like a shaft directed toward the aperture of *brahma*. *Prāṇadaṇḍa prayoga* is explained by Jayaratha thus: just as a serpent being struck with a rod becomes straight so when the coiled *śakti* is aroused, the movements of *prāṇa* and of *apāna* become balanced. Then it begins to move upward.

Abhinavagupta states that the activity of *prāṇa* is of two types:

आद्या तु प्राणनाभिख्या परोच्चारात्मिका भवेत् ॥

TĀI V.18cd

Of the two modes of the vital energy, the former is known as the generic life-force and the other is of the form of upward movement (*uccāra*).

Of the modes of the above stated *prāṇa*, the one is the base of the five-formed *prāṇa*, designated as the *sāmānyapṛāṇīya* and the five others are *viśiṣṭapṛāṇātmikā*.

In the context of restraining of breath (*prāṇāyāma*) the **Mṛgendra Āgama** states:

प्राण प्रागुदितो वायुरायामोऽस्य प्रखेदनम् ।

प्रेरणाकृष्टिसंरोधलक्षणं क्रतुदोषनुत् ॥

MṛgĀ yp I.4

Breath is the wind described before. Its discipline is its thrusting up. It is characterised by inspiration, expiration and stoppage. It removes the defects of the will (mind, *kratu*). (Tr. B. Bäumer)

Or in another way it is stated that it is the act of vivifying and the other is its character of modality.

इयं सा प्राणनाशक्तिरान्तरे ऋगदोहदा ।

स्पन्दः स्फुरत्ता विश्रान्तिर्जीवो हृत्प्रतिभा मता ॥

सा प्राणवृत्तिः प्राणाद्यै रूपैः पञ्चभिरात्मसात् ।

देहं यत्कुरुते संवित्पूर्णस्तेनैष भासते ॥

TĀI VI.13-14

This power of vivifying or animating is longing for having the inner

stir which is otherwise known as vibration, throb, rest, life, heart and intuition. When this general pulsation or vibration by means of five modalities of *prāṇa* and so on makes the body to be one with it, then it shines with fullness of consciousness.

In the Śaiva doctrine while explaining creation it is stated that consciousness in its creative upsurge expresses itself first as *prāṇa*: *prāk saṃvit prāṇe pariṇata*.

The *Mṛgendra Āgama* throws further light on the concept of *prāṇa* thus:

प्राणापानादयस्ते तु भिन्ना वृत्तेर्न वस्तुतः ।
 वृत्तिं लेशान्निगदतो भरद्वाज निबोध मे ॥
 वृत्तिः प्रणयनं नाम यत्तज्जीवनमुच्यते ।
 यत्तदूहं मतिः पुंसां भ्रमत्यन्धेव मार्गती ॥
 तत्कुर्वन्नुच्यते प्राणः प्राणो वा प्राणयोगतः ।
 चित्यातिवाहिके शक्तौ प्राणशब्दः कलासु च ॥

MṛgĀ vp XI.21-23

Prāṇa, *apāna*, etc. (the five kinds of breath) are not different in reality, but only in function. Listen, O Bharadvāja, I will tell you in short about these functions.

The function of 'leading' (*prāṇayana*) is called life. The thought of human beings searching for a conclusion wanders in illusion.

If it achieves the (thought), it is called 'breath', because it is joined with breath. But the word breath (*prāṇa*) is applied to consciousness, to the subtle body, to energy (*śakti*) and to *kalā* (the *kalās* pl.).

(Tr. B. Bäumer)

The exercise of breath control or *prāṇāyāma* is one of the eight limbs of yoga described in the *Yoga-Sūtra* of Patañjali (I.34, II.29, II.49 ff.):

तस्मिन्सति श्वासप्रश्वासयोर्गतिविच्छेदः प्राणायामः ॥

सत्यासनजये बाह्यस्य वायोराचमनं श्वासः, कौष्ठ्यस्य वायोर्निःसारणं प्रश्वासः, तयोर्गतिविच्छेद उभयाभावः प्राणायामः ॥

YSūBh II.49

When there is this [stability of posture], the restraint of breath cutting off the flow of inspiration and expiration [follows].

After the mastery of posture [follows the restraint of the breath]. Inspiration is the sipping in of the outer wind; expiration is the expulsion of the abdominal wind. Restraint of the breath is the

cutting off of the flow of these two, the absence of both kinds.
(Tr. J.H. Woods)

बाह्याभ्यन्तरस्तम्भवृत्तिर्देशकालसंख्याभिः परिदृष्टो दीर्घसूक्ष्मः ॥

YSū II.50

External or internal or suppressed in fluctuation and is regulated in place and time and number and is protracted and subtile.
(Tr. J.H. Woods)

बाह्याभ्यन्तरविषयाक्षेपी चतुर्थः ॥

देशकालसंख्याभिर्बाह्यविषयपरिदृष्ट आक्षिप्तः । तथाऽऽभ्यन्तरविषयपरिदृष्ट आक्षिप्तः । उभयथा दीर्घसूक्ष्मः । तत्पूर्वको भूमिजयात्क्रमेणोभयोर्गत्यभावश्चतुर्थः प्राणायामः ।

YSūBh II.51

The fourth [restraint of the breath] transcends the external and the internal object.

The external object regulated in place and time and number is transcended; the internal object regulated in the same way is transcended; in both kinds of cases [restraint] is protracted and subtile. Following after these there is no flow of either kind. This is the fourth restraint of breath. (Tr. J.H. Woods)

We find many variations of *prāṇāyāma* in the different schools of yoga, such as Haṭhayoga.

Prāṇāgnihotra

Agnihotra is an oblation to →*agni* chiefly of milk, curd or sour gruel, but *prāṇāgnihotra*, as recorded in the **Chāndogya Upaniṣad** (V.19.1–23.2) is nothing other than the aspirant's intake of food considering it as performance of *agnihotra*. But in that case only that much food should be taken as is required for offering five oblations to *pañcaprāṇa*. In later days the Gṛhyasūtras have dealt the matter in more details.

The **Prāṇāgnihotra Upaniṣad** describes the "sacrifice (performed) in the body" (*śārīraṃ yajñam*) with all the detailed correspondences between the external and internal sacrifice. The basic idea is the correspondence between *prāṇa*, *agni* and *sūrya*.

प्राणोऽग्निः परमात्मा पञ्चवायुभिरावृतः ।

अभयं सर्वभूतेभ्यो न मे भीतिः कदा च नैति ॥

Prāṇāgnihotra Up 22

Breath is Agni, is the Supreme Self,

enveloped by the five winds: may he
bestow fearlessness on all beings!
May I never have to fear! (Tr. B. Bäumer)

It is not only a sacrifice of food into the fire of breath, but a transformation of the body and a spiritualisation of all aspects of life. The body itself is called the altar of sacrifice (*śarīraṃ vediḥ*, 40). Non-violence are the offerings and renunciation is the priestly honorarium (*ahiṃsā iṣṭayastyāgo dakṣiṇā*, 46). This bodily sacrifice is performed to all the divinities residing in the body (*sarvā hy asmin devatāḥ śarīre'dhisamāhitāḥ*, 48).

The oblation of the vital air into the fire of the body is prescribed to be performed throughout one's life. The procedure is described in **Vaikhāṇasa Gṛhya-Sūtra** thus:

स्वयंज्योतिरात्मा यजमानो बुद्धिः पत्नी हृदयपुण्डरीकं वेदी रोमाणि दर्भाः प्राणो
गार्हपत्योऽपान आहवनीयो व्यानोऽन्वाहार्य उदानः सभ्यः समान आवसथ्य इति
पञ्चाग्रयो भवन्ति जिह्वादीन्द्रियाणि यज्ञपात्राणि रसादयो विषया हवींष्यस्य
फलमोमर्थावासिस्तदेवमेकाध्वर्युरात्मयज्ञं संकल्प्यामृतोपस्तरणमसीत्यन्नं
प्रोक्ष्यान्नसूक्तेनाभिमृश्योर्जस्करमित्याधावं पीत्वाङ्गुष्ठानामिकामध्यमैरादायात्रं प्राणाय
स्वाहापानाय स्वाहा व्यानाय स्वाहोदानाय स्वाहा समानाय स्वाहेति पञ्चाहुतीः पात्रं
स्पृशन्नेव हुत्वोर्जस्करमिति पुनश्चाधावं पीत्वाशनीयादाचम्यापो गृहीत्वा आदित्याभिमुखोमं
प्राणानाप्यायस्वेत्युदरमभिमृशेद् दक्षिणेन कराङ्गुष्ठाग्रेणाणोरणीयानिति दक्षिणपादाङ्गुष्ठे
संस्नावयेदेवं प्राणाग्निहोत्रं यजेत ।

VaiGṛhSū II.18

The performer of the oblation conceives the self-luminous self as the priest, the intellect is his wife, the altar is the red lotus of the heart, the hairs are the *kuśa* grass, *prāṇa* is the *gārhapatya* fire, *apāna* the *āhavanīya*, *vyāna* the *anvāhārya*, *udāna* the *sabhya*, *samāna* the *āvasathya* – in this way five fires are conceived. The sense organs from the tongue onward are the sacrificial implements, the objects are the tastes and so on, are the food for the fire. The result is *artha* (object) to be attained, is denoted by the sound *Om*. Thus the single *adhvaryu* after deciding to perform *ātmayajña*, the sacrifice of the self after sprinkling water on the food and calling it to be the substratum spread over the food representing nectar and recites *anna sūkta*. Thus touching the food he should drink the agitated mixture and taking up a little of the food with three fingers, the thumb, the fourth and the middle uttering: I offer the food to *prāṇa*, *svāhā*; I offer the food to *apāna*, *svāhā*; I offer the food to *vyāna*, *svāhā*; I offer the food

to *udāna*, *svāhā*; I offer the food to *samāna*, *svāhā*. In this way five oblations are offered while touching the food plate, then he drinks the vigorous mixture once again. After having finished his meal he should wash his mouth and sip water. Taking water in his hand he should utter *Om* facing the Sun. Having touched his belly he prays, O God, nourish my vital airs with the tip of the thumb of the right hand and then he should offer water to the toe of the right foot to the deity who is subtler than all subtles. Thus he should perform this kind of *prāṇāgnihotra* twice in the evening and in the morning.

We find the same idea of *prāṇāgnihotra* in the **Prapañcasāra Tantra** (VIII.3). The text states that in the *mūlādhāra* five pits and fires are conceived. They are located in the middle, east, west, north and south. The pits are named *āvasathya*, *sabhya*, *āhavanīya*, *anvāhārya* and *gārhapatya*. The above pits are conceived in the belly by the aspirant while he is engaged in taking his meals. Then a triangle is conceived located in the *mūlādhāra* region which is said to be two digits below the penis, with a *bindu* in the centre.

मध्ये प्राग्वरुणेन्द्रयाम्यलसितैः कुण्डैर्ज्वलद्बहिभि-
 मूलाधारमनारतं समतलं योगी स्मरेत् सिद्धये ॥
 मध्येन्द्रवरुणशशियमदिग्भवानि क्रमेण कुण्डानि ।
 आवसथजसभ्याहवनीयान्वाहार्यगार्हपत्यानि ॥
 चिद्रूपात् सकलप्रभाप्रभवकात्मूलप्रकृत्यात्मनः
 कल्पाकात् प्रतिलोमतोऽमृतमयीं ज्योतीं रुचाऽच्छां धिया ।
 स्पृष्टामक्षरमालिकां तु जुहुयात् कुण्डेषु तेषु क्रमात् ॥

PSāT VIII.2cd-4abc

During taking one's meal one should meditate on the middle (of the stomach), the front, the west, the south adorned with five pits blazing with fire. But while practising yoga, he should meditate on the *mūlādhāra* as a plain ground for the attainment of yoga.

The sacrificial pits have emerged from the direction of the centre, the east, the west, the south respectively. They are named *āvasathaja*, *sabhya*, *āhavanīya*, *anvāhārya* and *gārhapatya*. The performer of the oblation should offer the series of syllables born of consciousness which is the primary source of all lights known as the primordial *Prakṛti*. They have descended in the reverse order (that is *ha* to *a*) down from the Sun abiding in the centre of the twelve. They are nectarine shining with luminous light. One should offer them mentally in the different fire pits.

According to Tantric view, it is *agnihotra* in the form of offering *prāṇa* (i.e. vital air) into the supposed fire of plexus (*cakras*) of the body beginning from *mūlādhāra* and ending *sahasrāra*. The *yogin* offers the incoming and outgoing breaths into the contemplated fire of *mūlādhāra* first. Here, the number of repetition of *ajapāmantra* in the form of inhaling and exhaling is six hundred. Similarly six thousand are offered in the *svādhiṣṭhāna cakra*; another twelve thousand should be offered in the *maṇipura* and *anāhata* (the number is six thousand in each); but later, in the *viśuddhi*, *ājñā* and *sahasrāra*, number of offering is reduced in one thousand in each. Thus, twenty-one thousand six hundred times of inhaling and exhaling during twenty four hours of the day are utilised by the *yogin* as offerings in the fire existing in the body.

Manifestation in the Arts

In the arts *prāṇa* is essential, both in its physical and conceptual meanings. The **Svacchanda Tantra** summarizes this relationship thus:

जल्पितं हसितं गीतं नृत्तं युद्धगतिः कलाः ॥
शिल्पं च सर्वकर्माणि प्राणस्यैवं विचेष्टितम् ।

SvT VII.306cd-307ab

All the activities of talking, laughing, singing, dancing, war-movements, activities related to various arts (*kalā*) and crafts (*śilpa*) are the functions of (specific) *prāṇa*.

Prāṇa is most directly related to sound, hence to music. The Vedic singers were conscious of the necessity of breath for voice-production when they identified the *sāman* or *udgītha* with *prāṇa* (BrUp I.3.23). The origin of articulate speech is →*nāda*, the primeval sound.

जातः प्राणाग्निसंयोगात्तेन नादोऽभिधीयते ॥

SMak I.6cd

What generates from the union of life-breath and fire is known as *nāda* (sound). (Tr. M. Bose)

Speech or sound are closely associated with the internal air which is a form of *prāṇa*, hence *nāda* and *prāṇa* are non-different. This is the view of Mātāṅga in his **Bṛhaddeśī**:

नकारः प्राण इत्याहुर्दकारश्चानलो मतः ।
नादस्य द्विपदार्थोऽयं समीचीनो मयोदितः ॥

BrD 20

The letter 'na' is spoken of as *prāṇa* (air) and the letter 'da' is known as fire; this is spoken of by me as the meaning of the dual verbal component (*pada*) of *nāda*. (Tr. P.L. Sharma)

Prāṇa is the characteristic of *anusvana*, the musical note which adds sweetness to the vocal sound. This is the view of Kumbha as is given in the following verse:

अनुस्वनस्वरूपः सन् प्रबन्धपदगामिभिः ।
उपाधिभिरभिव्यक्तः स्थानत्रितयवर्तिभिः ।
प्रीणयन् जनचेतांसि प्राण इत्युच्यते रवः ।

Quoted in Bharatakośa s.v.

Being of the nature of musical note (*anusvana*) representing *nāda* it becomes manifest by the accidental attributes abiding in the continuous series of *prabandha* with three of its locations, viz. *mandra*, *madhya* and *tāra*. It is known as *prāṇa*, the sound. It pleases the heart of people.

In the context of dance (*nṛtya*) it is clear that the movement of breath has to be co-ordinated with the movement of the limbs. This can be related even with the apparently lifeless sculpture.

In image-making, there are two ways of infusing breath into the image: the first starts with the very outline or diagram which is drawn on the surface of the stone before carving.

आदौ वृत्तं वृत्तमिति विश्वम् ॥

तद्रूपे प्राणः, यथा पुरुषस्य मनः ... ।

वृत्तं हि पूर्णम् ॥

बिन्दुस्तस्याधारः, आहुतिरिव जगन्मयः प्राणः । सा स्थितिः ... । यथा सर्वाणि भूतानि भ्रमन्ति तथा नानारूपाणि जायन्ते । स वै प्राणः ... ।

VSUp II.6-7

In the beginning is a circle. The circle is the All (universe).

The breath of life (*prāṇa*) is (contained) in its form, even as the mind is in Man.....

The circle verily is the Plenum (fullness, *pūrṇam*).

The *bindu* is its support. As the sacrificial offering (*āhuti*) it is the life-breath of the world, it is its position... Just as all living beings revolve, thus many forms originate. That is the breath of life. (Tr. A. Boner and B. Bäumer)

The basic idea is that the centre of the circle is the very life-breath and the creative point. For the same reason the text says that 'the creation of the image starts from the navel' (VSUp II.10), i.e. the centre of all the veins. In this procedure the image is already infused with life from the very beginning. The second is the process of *prāṇapratīṣṭhā* already mentioned, when the image is ritually infused with the divine breath.

While performing the *prāṇapratīṣṭhā* rituals before an image for worship (→*mūrti*, *arcā*) the worshipper infuses *prāṇa* in it in the following way:

पाशादित्र्यक्षरात्मान्ते स्यादमुष्य पदं ततः ।
 क्रमात् प्राणा इह प्राणास्तथा जीव इह स्थितः ॥
 अमुष्य सर्वेन्द्रियाणि भूयोऽमुष्य पदं भवेत् ।
 वाङ्मनो नयन श्रोत्रघ्राणप्राण पदान्यथ ॥
 पश्चादिहागत्य चिरं तिष्ठन्तु उद्वयम् ।

ŚāTil IV. 82–84ab

After uttering three syllables beginning with *pāśa amuṣya* is followed. Then its *prāṇa* should abide here, its life may stay here along with all its sense organs. It is followed by the phrase *amuṣya* (of the deity), then it is followed by speech, mind, eyes, ears, the life force belonging to the deity may come over here (in the image) and stay for long. It is followed by *svāhā*.

In the Agamic tradition infusion of *prāṇa* of the desired deity is done first on the worshipper's own self and later the actual *prāṇapratīṣṭhā* is done on the image.

Stella Kramrisch summarizes the whole relationship of sculpture with *prāṇa*:

"Yoga discipline is as much a prerequisite for the Indian artist as was physical discipline for the Greek. It is as though in Indian art the image is embossed from within by the movement of breath or circulation through the vital centres of the living being, unimpeded by the gross matter of the actual physical body. A plastic quality results that is as though carried by the living breath with which the image is filled; conducted by the smooth channels of body and limbs. These smooth channels have pristine glow and a continuity of outline as though what they hold were an equivalent of the breath of God" (*Exploring Indian's Sacred Art*, p. 4).

Conclusion

The basic nature of *prāṇa* is the internal stir or intentness (*āntarodyogarūpa*) on the base of which other specific forms become manifest. When it fills the body

with five specific forms the body appears sentient and full in every respect.

When the universe is seen in the perspective of art, we realize that the cosmic vital energy expresses itself in individual forms and other agreeable objects seem to be delightful only because they help a person of good concentration to be aware of the Supreme Consciousness. *Prāṇa* is of the nature of creativity which is ceaselessly active in displaying distinctive individual forms, but as an undercurrent it remains present through them all.

The vital energy, with the characteristic of universal vibration, has its resting place in the core of the heart from where it expands itself in forms. Vedic altars, sacred diagrams, representation of the deity, arrangement to fingers (*mudrā*), dance and music are its expressions. But it should be remembered in this context that unless we get everything linked (*anusandhāna*) with consciousness, installation of life cannot be possible. While watching any beautiful object, the vital energy makes us aware of the presentation of the object. This is the first stage of visual or audiovisual experience of delight. But the highest form of delight is experienced when *prāṇa* gets merged in the Supreme Consciousness.

Hemendra Nath Chakravarty

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BĪJA

Overview

Everything, whatever exists in the world, is classified under two groups. The first is eternal and the second is transient. The transient beings are those which come into being on account of a cause. The cause on which the effect depends is known as the seed or *bīja* (n.). It is the source or the primary principle from which all the other principles proceed.

The seed is the germ of life. When the seed of a plant is put in a favourable condition it begins to germinate and grows as a lively plant with tiny foliage and branches. Thus, life which remained captivated in the seed begins to dance in harmonious rhythm.

In the Vedas, *bīja* has been used in three different senses, viz. as the seed of corn, the main sustainer of life, which serves its healthy prolongation. In the above sense it is nothing but food (*annam*). But in another sense it is semen (*retas*) signifying the fertilizing fluid of a male animal or the female germ capable of developing into a new individual when fertilized by male sperm. In still another sense it signifies the primary cause (*kāraṇam*) of every effect (*kāryam*). In the causal significance the term means both the efficient and material causes. It represents God, the instrument or the agent of all activities in the universe, therefore the ultimate cause is the Supreme Consciousness from which everything proceeds.

In the Upaniṣads and the **Bhagavad-Gītā** the idea of *bīja* as germ, semen, and cause is emphasized, but in some later Upaniṣads and in the Tantras it is stated to be of the nature of seed-syllable (*haṃ* and *saḥ*). The Vedic idea of the uniqueness of *bīja*, the primary cause, though remaining one, is made manifold by the mere will of the Lord (*ekaṃ bījaṃ bahudhā yaḥ karoti*, ŚvUp VI.12), has been elaborated. The idea of potency (*śaktirūpatā*) regarding *bīja* has been dealt with in various Agamic texts (*bījasthaśaktirūpaḥ*). Sometimes in Tantric texts *bīja* denotes the basic principle, the dynamic *śakti* known to the spiritualists as *kuṇḍalinī*, the coiled energy, which is the very life of every entity (*jīvabhūta*). The entire universe is its manifestation and expansion.

In Sāṃkhya and Vedānta, *bīja* is → *prakṛti* (Vol. III) or *māyā*, the original cause of entities (*bhāvānām bījam*), while in the dramatic composition the seed is the import of the principal sentence which becomes diffused through many actors and finally ends in denouement.

Etymology

There are several ways of deriving the term:

- (i) *Bīja* particularly means that which is born as the effect and offspring (*kāryarūpeṇa apatyatayā ca*).
- (ii) It means 'go' (*ijate*), go inside the stomach or inside the body. The verbal root *ij-* which means to move and censure (*ija gatikutsanayoḥ*, Dhātupāṭha – I.196).
- (iii) It originates directly from the verbal root *bīj-* which means *bijate gacchati garbhāśayam iti bījaḥ*, i.e. it moves or goes inside the uterus.
- (iv) *Veti prajāyate*, means it takes birth.
- (v) In the **Mādhavīyā Dhātuvṛtti** it is said that the verbal root *vīj-* implies activity which drives (*preraṇakriyā*).
- (vi) In Devarāja's commentary on the **Nighaṇṭu** (II.2.15) *bīja* is derived for the purpose of effecting a result (*preryate hi kāryakaraṇāya*).
- (vii) Kullūka and Medhātithi in their commentaries on the **Manu Smṛti** state that *bīja* is of the nature of →*śakti*.

Layers of Meaning

Bīja has been used in a number of meanings. Among them the most salient is *kāraṇa*, that is, cause, and this is the primary meaning of the term. Cause is thought to be of two types, abstract and concrete.

In the abstract sense it signifies *māyā*, *prakṛti* or the Supreme Will of the Lord, but in the concrete sense it means the seed of corn, sperm and ovum (*śukra*, *vīrya*, etc.).

Bīja is the basic principle not only of the physical but of the psychic and spiritual world. It is the microcosmic unit from which everything evolves, flourishes into healthy life, gives birth to new lives and ever remains present in its offspring. It is the unending source of life. If →*prāṇa*, the life force, be taken to be the rhythmic expression of life, *bīja* should be thought of as the dynamic energy which activates *prāṇa* to move, hence *ijate*, the verb, means 'go' and it drives others to move.

Bīja is a small drop of life, a →*bindu* (Vol. II) which is the cause of the multifarious world. When seen in its biological aspect, it is the nucleus of a life cell from which other cells grow and multiply. As seen in the light of the ultimate cause, *bīja* is *manaso retaḥ* (RV X.129.4) the primary desire in the mind of the

Lord. It is thought to be the flow of semen in which lies embedded the aggregate of the past deeds of all beings.

The seed, when it denotes the seed of corn, is the food for life, the principal means of subsistence. It makes the gross body subsist. Therefore *anna* or food being the main basis of life, this physical body is thought of as consisting of food. It supports life and nourishes the sheath of the body known as the sheath made of food (*annamaya kośa*), similarly other sheaths called *prāṇamaya*, *manomaya*, *vijñānamaya* and *ānandamaya kośas* are also indirectly nourished by the seed of corn. Therefore it is evident that seed which gives a start to life does not cease to act as long as the being does not attain its finality through different grades of development.

The seed can be seen in still another aspect of *guṇas*, viz. *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*, for some time it activates, causes inertia, and opens up the broad vista of light, because three fundamental *guṇas* function through the seed. The grossest element of the seed contains with it the food of gross life, while the subtler element activates one to take active interest in the various functions of life. The finer element of the seed promotes and leads one to the intuitive level of consciousness, and finally helps one enjoy the beauty of the external world and the world within. Then ultimately it leads one to the level from where one is able to conceive the highest unity where the distinctions of the inner and the outer merge into the unity of the Supreme Equilibrium (*parama sāmāsyā*).

Another layer of meaning belongs to the area of *mantra*, where the one-syllabled *mantras* are called *bija-mantra*. Since they contain the power of the deity as if in seed-form.

Development of the Concept

The concept of *bīja* has passed through different levels of ideas. The basic idea of *bīja* as the seed of corn was known to the Vedic seers, for they knew that the continuity of life depends on an unending supply of food. Hence they used to pray to Maruts for the seed of corn for their children.

येन तोकाय तनयाय धान्यं बीजं वहध्वे अक्षितम् ।

RV V.53.13ab

For child and progeny, Ye give the seed of corn that wasteth not away.
(Tr. R.T.H. Griffith)

The seed is described as the semen. The fertility becomes fulfilled when a woman gives birth to a child. She is then called by the dear name mother. The semen that is inseminated is rightly called auspicious, because of its fruitfulness.

यानि भद्राणि बीजान्यृषभा जनयन्ति च ।
तैस्त्वं पुत्रं विन्दस्व सा प्रसूर्धेनुका भर ॥

AV (P) III.14.4

Do thou obtain thyself a son (being united) with those auspicious seeds which the bulls germinate and carry a fruitful milch-cow.
(Tr. S. Chattopadhyay)

In the Vedas *bija* has both a physical and symbolical meaning. To the Vedic seers the sacrificial altar, oblation, and *soma* have symbolical significance. *Soma* is considered to represent semen, because it is liquid and consists of enlivening energy:

इयं वेदिः परो अन्तः पृथिव्या अयं यज्ञो भुवनस्य नाभिः ।
अयं सोमो वृष्णो अश्वस्य रेतो ब्रह्मायं वाचः परमं व्योम ॥

RV I.164.35

This altar (*vedi*) is the farthest limit of *vāk*. This *yajña* is the centre of the universe. *Soma* is the prolific seed of the fecunding Horse. *Brahmā* priest is the highest heaven of *vāk*. (Tr. R.T.H. Griffith)

Coming back to the physical meaning, the husband enters the wife in the shape of the seed.

आभूतिरेषा भूतिर्बीजमेतन्निधीयते ।

AitBr VII.13.10

The seed which is placed in her (wife), she develops to a being and sets it forth. (Tr. M. Haug)

The *Aitareya Āraṇyaka* shows how *bija* or *retas* are formed and developed in the body.

पुरुषे ह वा अयमादितो गर्भो भवति । यदेतद्रेतस्तदेतत् सर्वेभ्योऽङ्गेभ्यस्तेजः
सम्भूतमात्मन्येवात्मानं बिभर्ति तद् यदा स्त्रियां सिञ्चत्यथैनज्जनयति ।

AitĀr II.5.1

In man he is from the first as a germ. That seed is strength gathered from all the limbs and he thus bears a self in his self. When he connects the seed to the woman, then he causes it to be born.
(Tr.A.B. Keith)

The idea of *retas*, the germ of life, is equated with *soma*. The father's sperm and mother's ovum are both two forms of *Soma*: *reto vai somaḥ* (ŚBr I.9.2.9). The forms of *retas* or *soma* may be different in the two parents, but they are essentially one and the same principle: *ubhayataḥ parigrhītaṃ vai retaḥ prajāyate* (ŚBr

II.3.1.32). The seed is the same as birth. Both *retas* and *soma*, whatever be their material form in the male and the female, are but the same life-principle.

In the Vedas it is prayed that the person of excellent vigour may procreate offspring with his semen.

यस्ते योनिमुदिङ्ग्यादृषभो रेतसा सह ।

स त आ सिञ्चतु प्रजां दीर्घायुं शतशारदाम् ॥

AV (P) III.14.7

May the vigorous male moisten your womb with the semen in pulsating move and create offspring so that they may live hundred autumns.

The cycle of creation has excellently been described in the following extract from the Āraṇyaka:

अथातो रेतसः सृष्टिः । प्रजापते रेतो देवा, देवानां रेतो वर्ष, वर्षस्य रेत औषधय, औषधीनां रेतोऽन्नमन्नस्य रेतो रेतो, रेतसो रेतः प्रजाः ।

AitĀr II.1.3

Then comes the origin of seed. The seed of Prajāpati are the gods. The seed of the gods is rain. The seed of rain is herbs. The seed of herbs is food. The seed of food is seed. The seed of seed is creatures. (Tr. A.B. Keith)

In the Upaniṣad the term *retas* has been used to mean *bīja*.

योषा वाव गौतमाग्निः, तस्या उपस्थ एव समित्, यदुपमन्त्रयते स धूमः, योनिरर्चिः, यदन्तः करोति तेऽङ्गाराः, अभिनन्दा विस्फुलिङ्गाः । तस्मिन्नेतस्मिन्नग्नौ देवा रेतो जुह्वति, तस्या आहुतेर्गर्भः संभवति ।

ChUp V.8.1-2

Woman, verily, O Gautama, is a sacrificial fire. In this case the sexual organ is the fuel; when one invites, the smoke; the vulva, the flame; when one inserts, the coals; the sexual pleasure, the sparks.

In this fire the gods offer semen. From this oblation arises the fetus. (Tr. R.E. Hume)

Both the sperm and ovum have some spiritual significance. To the seers they represent Agni and Āditya.

तद् यदेतत् स्त्रियां लोहितं भवत्यग्रेस्तद्रूपं तस्मात्तस्मान्न बीभत्सेताथ यदेतत्पुरुषे रेतो भवत्यादित्यस्य तद्रूपं तस्मात्तस्मान्न बीभत्सेत ।

AitĀr II.3.7

The blood in the woman is the form of Agni, therefore one should despise it not. The seed in the man is the form of Āditya, therefore one should despise it not. (Tr. A.B. Keith)

According to the Buddhist doctrine *bīja* is understood to be the cause of the apparent world. In the Tantric thought *bīja* is synonymous with *śukra* (semen and ovum) related to both man and woman. *Śukra* also indicates both the relative and the absolute.

पुंसि तावद् [धि] द्वैविध्यं शुक्रं तस्य सुखं च वा ।

प्रज्ञायां च यथा पुंसि शुक्रं तस्य सुखं च वा ॥

HT I.8.29

In man there is this twofold nature, *śukra* (relative) and the bliss arising from it (absolute); in woman too it is the same, *śukra* and bliss arising from it. (Tr. D.L. Snellgrove)

In another context seed means seed-syllable of the divine being. According to the Buddhists, mind should be conceived of as free from false appearances and as consisting of pure brilliance. The aspirant for the emergence of the desired deity should conceive in the beginning, in the brilliance of the solar disk, the divine seed out of which emerges the desired deity. The procedure has been given in the following verse thus:

प्रथमं शून्यताबोधिं द्वितीयं बीजसंग्रहम् ।

तृतीयं बिम्बनिष्पत्तिं चतुर्थत्रयासमक्षरम् ॥

HT I.3.2

First the realization of the void, secondly the seed in which all is concentrated, thirdly the physical manifestation, and fourthly one should implant the syllable. (Tr. D.L. Snellgrove)

Thus it is clear from the above description that *bīja* is the germ from which the divine being emerges.

Bīja is considered by the Yogācāra school of the Buddhist thinkers as *ālayavijñāna*, the storehouse of all previous impression:

'According to the Vijñānavāda the *ālayavijñāna*, the fundamental, 'eighth', consciousness principle, undifferentiated in itself, but containing the potentialities of differentiation (therefore also called the *bīja* – MSūAlBh XI.44bh), as receptacle of all *bījas*, *sarvabījakam ālayavijñānam* (Triṃśikā 2cd), is split up or transformed (*pariṇāma*) into a series of *pravṛtti vijñānas*.

Bīja is considered not only the cause of the world, but in reality it is neither the semen nor the seed of corn, it is the mind which is the root cause of worldly existence and also of *nirvāṇa*. This is emphasized in the following verse:

चित्तमेव महाबीजं भवनिर्वाणयोरपि ।

संवृत्तौ संवृतिं यातिनिर्वाणे निःस्वभावताम् ॥

Jñānasambodhi quoted in Caryācarya
Vinīścaya Tīkā under No. 18

It is mind which is an immense seed of both worldly existence and liberation. It becomes relative in the worldly existence and in liberation it becomes free from distinctive nature.

In the *Nyāya-Sūtra Bhāṣya* of Vātsyāyana it has been stated that the body of the living being is born of the union of ovum and sperm.

बीजपूर्विका तु शरीरोत्पत्तिः ... लोहितरेतसी बीजशब्देन गृह्यते ।

NySūBh III.2.63

The body is always produced from seeds, the ovum and semen are known by the term *bīja*. (Tr. G.N. Jha)

Āyurveda being the science of Life describes the physical aspect of seed. Not only sperm and ovum are necessary for the birth of a body but other factors are also essential.

ध्रुवं चतुर्णां सान्निध्याद्गर्भः स्याद्विधिपूर्वकम् ।

ऋतुक्षेत्राम्बुबीजानां सामग्र्यादंकुरो यथा ॥

SuSam Śāsthā II.33

A co-ordination of four factors, viz. menstrual period (*ṛtu*), healthy womb (*kṣetra*), nutrient liquid, i.e. chyle of digested food (*ambu*), healthy semen (*bīja*) and proper observance of rules, is necessary for the conception and development of a healthy child, just as the season (*ṛtu*), good soil (*kṣetra*), water (containing nutrient matter) and vigorous seeds (*bīja*) together with proper care, help the germination of strong and undiseased sprouts.

(Tr. K.L. Bhishagratna)

Ḍalhaṇa, the commentator defines *bīja* thus:

बीजं स्त्रीपुंसयोरार्तवशुक्रे ।

Ḍalhaṇa on SuSamŚāsthā II.33

The seed is the blood and semen belonging to the woman and man.

The seed when inseminated does not always help conception but it depends on other factors.

एवं योनिषु शुद्धासु गर्भं विन्दन्ति योषितः ॥

अदुष्टे प्राकृते बीजे जीवोपक्रमणे सति ।

CarSam CiSthā XXX.125cd-126ab

Thus when the genital track is normalized, the women conceive if the seed (sperm and ovum) is normal and undamaged and the consciousness has moved in. (Tr. P.V. Sharma)

The sperm and ovum belonging to man and woman being normal (i.e. *sahajaguṇa sampanna*), they as the seed are able to help the woman to conceive.

The seed gives birth to a fruit. Both the seed and fruit are interrelated, therefore:

फलाद्वीजमनुमीयते, फलं च बीजात् ।

CarSam SūSthā XI.31

From the fruit the seed is inferred similarly from the seed the fruit.

Seeing the fruit inference is generally made regarding the cause, i.e. the past deeds performed in its previous life, similarly, the result that will occur in the future, can be inferred from the seeds which are sown in the present birth.

In the above quotation *bīja* is the cause, i.e. actions done in the previous birth, and *phala*, the result, is the pleasure and pain one is expected to experience.

The universe was born out of the primary cause. According to the Purāṇas it is the Lord who sows the seed of the universe in an immense receptacle to receive the seed. This is known as the causal water (*kāraṇa salila*) in which He deposited the seed.

यः शरीरादभिध्याय सिसृक्षुर्विविधं जगत् ।

अप एव ससर्जादौ तासु बीजमवासृजत् ॥

MatPur II.28 (cf. Manu I.8)

He after contemplation desired to create the multifarious universe out of the body, first created water, in them deposited the seed.
(Tr. C.R. Swaminathan)

Just as in the beginning of creation a single *bīja* starts the multifarious universe, similarly the Supreme Lord, collecting all the seeds of beings together, puts them on the boat of the Veda.

एतदेकार्णवं सर्वं करिष्यन्ति जगत् त्रयम् ।

वेदनावमिमां गृह्य सत्त्वबीजानि सर्वशः ॥

MatPur II.10

All these three worlds will be rendered into one big ocean. (You) get

into this boat of the Veda collecting the seeds of (all) creatures from all quarters. (Tr. C.R. Swaminathan)

The Veda is thus thought to be the ultimate source of creation. The seed signifying a mighty egg (*bṛhadanḍam*), the aggregate of all beings, is supported by the **Mahābhārata** thus:

निष्प्रभेऽस्मिन्निरालोके सर्वतस्तमसावृते ।
बृहदण्डमभूदेकं प्रजानां बीजमक्षयम् ॥

MBh I.1.27

In this world, when it was destitute of brightness, and enveloped all round in total darkness, there came into being, as the primal cause of creation, a mighty egg, the one inexhaustible seed of all created beings. (Tr. P.C. Roy)

In the **Bhagavad-Gītā** we find a number of references to *bīja*. Kṛṣṇa reveals himself as the seed-cause of the world:

यच्चापि सर्वभूतानां बीजं तदहमर्जुन ।
न तदस्ति विना यत्स्यान्मया भूतं चराचरम् ॥

BhG X.39

And what is the seed of all contingent beings, that too am I. No being is there, whether moving or unmoving, that exists or could exist apart from Me. (Tr. R.C. Zaehner)

The whole creation is likened to the process of insemination of the womb of *brahman*, the unmanifest, by the Father:

मम योनिर्महद्ब्रह्म तस्मिन्गर्भं दधाम्यहम् ।
संभवः सर्वभूतानां ततो भवति भारत ॥
सर्वयोनिषु कौन्तेय मूर्तयः संभवन्ति याः ।
तासां ब्रह्म महद्योनिरहं बीजप्रदः पिता ॥

BhG XIV.3-4

Great Brahman is to Me a womb, in it I plant the seed: from this derives the origin of all contingent beings. In whatever womb whatever form arises-and-grows-together, of (all) those (forms) great Brahman is the womb, I the father, giver of the seed. (Tr. R.C. Zaehner)

Rāmakaṇṭha, the Kashmiri commentator of the **Bhagavad-Gītā**, explains the Great Brahman as the great receptacle (the *yoni* of *prakṛti*) into which the Father deposits his vital energy of the nature of consciousness (*tasyāṃ ca yonau*

saṃvillakṣaṇasya svavīryasya pradhānāt ahaṃpitā). The implication is that the whole universe, *prakṛti* (*mahad brahma*) stands for 'objectivity' (*idantā*), whereas the divine Father (seed) stands for the supreme 'I' (*aham*).

Pradhāna as the cause of the cosmic creation is echoed in the **Viṣṇu Purāṇa**. The entire cosmic creation exists as an unexpanded germ (*bīja*) in *pradhāna* from which other categories evolved. After its evolution it is again reabsorbed in its seed:

न्यग्रोधः सुमहानल्पे यथा बीजे व्यवस्थितः ।

संयमे विश्वमखिलं बीजभूते तथा त्वयि ॥

बीजादङ्कुरसंभूतो न्यग्रोधस्तु समुत्थितः ।

विस्तारं च यथा याति त्वत्तः सृष्टौ तथा जगत् ॥

ViPur I.12.65-66

As the wide-spreading Nyagrodha (Indian fig) tree is compressed in a small seed, so, at the time of dissolution, the whole universe is comprehended in thee as its germ. As the Nyagrodha germinates from the seed, and becomes first a shoot and then rises into loftiness, so the created world proceeds from thee and expands into magnitude. (Tr. H.H. Wilson)

Bīja as the seed or semen has been used by Kālidāsa in the **Kumārasambhava**, while in the same text it is used as the primary cause of the universe. The following citations of the poet remind us of the **Manu Smṛti** where it is stated that after creating the great water the Supreme Lord placed His seed (*bīja*) in it. Kālidāsa in the same tune says that the seed of Śiva was *amogha* 'infallible' and it will certainly create.

While seed as a primary cause of the universe was also known to the poet and surprisingly he hints at the biological factor how a seed germinates with the aid of water.

तद्गच्छ सिद्धयै कुरु देवकार्यमर्थोऽयमर्थान्तरभाव्य एव ।

अपेक्षते प्रत्ययमुत्तमं त्वां बीजाङ्कुरः प्रागुदयादिवाम्भः ॥

Kum III.18

So, then, go to accomplish (this business); do the work of the gods. This purpose can only be attained by the achievement of another object: it (therefore) has need of you as its primary cause, as the sprouting up of a seed requires water before it can make its appearance. (M.R. Kale)

यदमोघमपामन्तरुसं बीजमज त्वया ।

अतश्चराचरं विश्वं प्रभवस्तस्य गीयसे ॥

Kum II.5

O unborn one, the Universe, composed of things that move and that do not move, has sprung from the ever-prolific seed which was cast by thee in the waters; hence art thou glorified as its source.

(Tr. M.R. Kale)

उभे एव क्षमे वोढुमुभयोर्बीजमाहितम् ।

सा वा शंभोस्तदीया वा मूर्तिर्जलमयी मम ॥

Kum II.60

Only these two are capable of bearing the seed of us two, when deposited – Umā of Śiva and His watery form of me. (Tr. M.R. Kale)

Similarly, the **Parātrīśikā** uses the simile of the seed which is the potency containing within it the future development of a tree.

यथा न्यग्रोधबीजस्थः शक्तिरूपो महाद्रुमः ।

PTrī 25ab

Just as in the seed of the banyan tree, the great tree remains as potency.

This view has been elaborated thus in the **Parātrīśikā Vivaraṇa** by Abhinavagupta as a simile for the whole creation:

यथा वटबीजे तत् समुचितेनैव वपुषा अंकुर वितप पत्रफलानि तिष्ठन्ति, एवं विश्वमिदं हृदयान्तः ।

PTrīVi 25

Just as in the seed of the banyan tree lie all the relevant parts, viz. sprout, branches, leaves and fruits, even so this universe lies in the heart of the Supreme. (Tr. J. Singh)

The Darśanas use *bīja* in all its meaning – physical, causal and metaphorical. According to Sāṃkhya, *bīja* is *pradhāna*, the unmanifest source of the world. In Vedānta *avidyā*, primordial nescience, is said to be the seed of multiplicity.

अविद्यात्मिका हि बीजशक्तिरव्यक्तशब्दनिर्देश्या परमेश्वराश्रया मायामयी महासुप्तिः ।

BrSūŚBh I.4.3

For that causal potentiality is of the nature of Nescience; it is rightly denoted by the term 'undeveloped'; it has the highest Lord for its substratum; it is of the nature of an illusion; it is universal sleep. (Tr. G. Thibaut)

Patañjali in his **Yoga-Sūtra** uses *bīja* in various connotations. In relation to the view of Vedānta, Patañjali considers *avidyā* as the 'field' of all the *kleśas* or impurities, viz. *avidyā*, *asmitā*, *rāga*, *dveṣa* and *abhiniveśa*. Though they do not

function during *sabīja* type of absorption (*samādhi*), the seed of *kleśas* goes back to the root cause *avidyā* and remains there as if lying asleep. Now the commentator asks:

तत्र का प्रसुप्तिः ? चेतसि शक्तिमात्रप्रतिष्ठानां बीजभावोपगमः ।

YSūBh II.4

What does deep slumber mean? The *kleśas* which lie dormant in the soil of *citta* only as potency (*śaktimātra*) have entered the state of the seed (seminal state).

That is why *avidyā* is called *hetu* (YSū II.24), the cause of bondage which has to be removed for absolute freedom to appear (II.25).

While describing *Īśvara*, the Lord who is free from *kleśas* etc., the sūtra says:

तत्र निरतिशयं सर्वज्ञबीजम् ॥

YSū I.25

In Him the seed of omniscience is unsurpassed.

This implies that omniscience is present in every being in seminal form, but in *īśvara* it exists in its fully developed state.

Patañjali describes two types of → *samādhi*, the one as *sabīja*, 'with seed', the other *nirbīja*, 'seedless'. *Sabīja samādhi* (I.46) is so called because it is a state of absorption which still contains the 'seed' of external objects (*bahirvastubīja iti samādhir api sabījaḥ*, YSūBh I.46). When even the residual traces (*saṃskāra*) of the mind are dissolved, it is *nirbīja*:

तस्यापि निरोधे सर्वनिरोधान्निर्बीजः समाधिः ॥

YSū I.51

By the stopping of that (impression of *aprajñāta*) seedless absorption is attained through the stopping of all (modifications).

Nirbīja thus means objectless and free even of the traces of impressions or mental modification (cf. YSūBh I.2). Vyāsa explains this state further:

तदभ्यासपूर्वं चित्तं निरालम्बनमभावप्राप्तमिव भवतीत्येष

निर्बीजः समाधिरसंप्रज्ञातः ।

YSūBh I.18

Its practice makes the mind independent of any object and non-existent as it were. (The mind of the *yogī* arrived at the level of) *nirbīja* or objectless *samādhi* is *asaṃprajñāta samādhi*.

(Tr. Hariharananda Aranya)

Bhartṛhari in his *Vākyapadīya* speaks of the Veda as the seed of all the Śāstras. The origin of the cosmic creation is the Supreme Lord or according to ancient seers it is the Veda from which everything has evolved. Therefore in the process of involution the entire world picture is withdrawn in the Veda which is thought to be eternal. It contains within it all the sacred texts.

Śāstras do not become extinct but go back to the original source and remain embedded in seed form in the Vedas. Hence Bhartṛhari writes:

न जात्वकर्तृकं कश्चिदागमं प्रतिपद्यते ।
बीजं सर्वागमापाये त्रय्येवातो व्यवस्थिता ॥

Vāk I.132

Nobody admits that there is any written tradition not associated with a particular author. When all such written traditions disappear, the three Vedas continue as the seed. (Tr. K.A.S. Iyer)

Here Āgama means all such traditions as originated and expounded by Kapila and others. As they are created by human agency, they will one day disappear, but the Vedas which are considered to be sentient like the self do not have any break. They are the seed in which all the traditions after their break in the mundane level, remain existent.

Tantra and Āgama

In Tantra one of the symbolic meanings of *bīja* is *śukra*, semen. During oblation the fire whether produced by the friction of *araṇis* or collected from the house of an *agnihotrī brāhmaṇa* it should be sanctified by means of certain rituals and then the fire is brought before the sacrificial pit. The worshipper makes the fire identified with his own consciousness, as if his consciousness has descended down and has entered the fire through the outlet of his nostril.

अग्निं तु शुक्रवत् ध्यात्वा चैतन्यं प्रणवेन तु ।
आत्मानं भैरवं ध्यात्वा अग्निं ध्यात्वा तु बीजवत् ।
ध्रुवेण कुण्डबाह्ये तु त्रिधा भ्राम्यावतारयेत् ॥
योनौ तु बीजवत् क्षित्वा ।

SvT II.198ab, 199–200a

One should meditate on the fire as semen and identify one's consciousness with it by uttering *praṇava*.

One should conceive oneself as Bhairava and conceiving the fire as the semen of Bhairava, and then uttering *praṇava* the worshipper takes the fire around the fire pit thrice. Then he brings it down and

drops it in the womb (i.e. the fire-pit) as semen is dropped.

The semen is put in the *yoni* of Vāgīśvarī. The fire is then known as *bhairavāgni* that is, born of Bhairava, the Lord and thus represents the Lord. *Bīja* is considered to have the highest potency and bestows potency to other *bījas*.

तद्योगादपि तद्वीजं सर्वबीजप्ररोहकम् ।

SvT VI.30ab

By the association of *niṣkala*, the highest Lord, the *bīja*, viz. *catuṣkala* and others attain the state of *niṣkala* and renders potency to them.

With reference to *mumukṣu*, the person who is desirous of liberation, initiation is stated to be of two types, the one is *sabīja* and the other is *nirbīja*. These two come under *putrakas* who are very keen to attain liberation only and nothing else.

मुमुक्षुर्द्विविधः प्रोक्तो निर्बीजो बीजवान् पुनः ।

बालबालिशवृद्धस्त्रीभोगभुग्व्याधितात्मनाम् ॥

एषां निर्बीजिका दीक्षा समयादिविवर्जिता ।

विद्वद् द्वन्द्वसहानां तु सबीजा कीर्तिता प्रिये ॥

SvT IV.87-88

The person desirous of liberation is said to be of two types, the one is *nirbīja* and the other, again, is possessed of *bīja*. *Nirbīja* initiation is bestowed on those who are very young, dullard, very old, women, too much attached to objects of enjoyment and those who are sick and not linked with any obligatory duties (technically called *samayācāra*) to be performed after initiation. On the other hand those who are learned and are able to bear pains and troubles of life the *dīkṣā* for them, O dear lady, is called *sabīja*.

Sabīja and *nirbīja* have a technical meaning. Everybody who receives initiation may be given either *sabīja* or *nirbīja*. Here *bīja* means with residue, that is the disciple has to follow some sort of binding.

With reference to the worship of Tripurasundarī, ten different *mudrās* are to be shown to the deity. One of them is called *bījamudrā*.

The authors of *Prapañcasāra Tantra* and *Śāradā-Tilaka* while dealing with creation elaborate the idea in the following manner.

सा तत्त्वसंज्ञा चिन्मात्रा ज्योतिषः सन्निधेस्तदा ।

विचिकीर्षुर्धनीभूता क्वचिदभ्येति बिन्दुताम् ॥

कालेन भिद्यमानस्तु स बिन्दुर्भवति त्रिधा ।

स्थूलसूक्ष्मपरत्वेन तस्य त्रैविध्यमिष्यते ॥
स बिन्दुनादबीजत्वभेदेन च निगद्यते ।

PSāT I.41-43ab

That Śakti designated as the principle composed of uniqueness of consciousness while coming into close contact with the light she becomes desirous of creativity and as a result solidifies itself and transforms itself into *bindu*. When the *bindu* is acted upon by time it becomes threefold namely the gross, the subtle and the beyond. It is then called *bindu*, *nāda* and *bīja*.

From *śakti nāda* emerges and from *nāda bindu* comes into being.

परशक्तिमयः साक्षात् त्रिधाऽसौ भिद्यते पुनः ।
बिन्दुर्नादो बीजमिति तस्य भेदाः समीरिताः ॥

ŚāTil I.8

The highest principle called *parāśakti* becomes threefold in the descending order. Its divisions are called *bindu*, *nāda* and *bīja*.

The **Prapañcasāra Tantra** gives an account of semen (*bīja*) and blood (*ārtava*) and describes the process how they, being mingled together, give birth to the *jarāyuja* beings, i.e. whose body is born from the womb:

जरायुजस्तु ग्राम्यातः क्रियातः स्तुतिसम्भवः ।
स जायते चतुर्विंशत्तत्त्वसंयुक्तदेहवान् ॥
स्वस्थानतश्च्युताच्छुक्राद् बिन्दुमादाय मारुतः ।
गर्भाशयं प्रविशति यदा तुल्यं तदापरः ॥
आर्तवात् परमं बीजमादायाऽस्याश्च मूलतः ।
यदा गर्भाशयं नेष्यत्यथ संमिश्रयेन्मरुत् ॥
मायीयं नाम योषोत्थं पौरुषं कर्मकं मलम् ।
आणवं नाम संयुक्तं मिलितं तन्मलद्वयम् ॥

PSāT I.70-73

The seed of the *jarāyuja* body emerges from the sexual intercourse. It is born with a body which contains twenty-four categories. A drop of semen discharged from its source is carried by the air and enters the uterus. From the blood the excellent seed is then taken and it also enters the uterus. The element which has emerged from the woman is *māyīya* and that of the male is *kārmaka* and the unity of both impurities is *āṇava*.

The supreme Śakti lies in the form of *kuṇḍalinī* in every conscious being, and

is therefore described as the seed of awakening. Abhinavagupta writes in his **Tantrāloka**:

सात्र कुण्डलिनी बीजं जीवभूता चिदात्मिका ॥

TĀI III.220cd

That coiled *śakti* is the seed, the very life, the potency of all. It is characterised by consciousness.

Kuṇḍalinī, the coiled *śakti*, is the source of the Universe. The entire universe is her immanent form, her own extension as the subject and the object. It is she who is always in every rhythm of life. She is the soul of all entities, *jīvabhūtā*. She is the seed. It is not anything inert, but sentient, therefore she is of the nature of consciousness (*cidrūpiṇī*).

Bija in common usage means cause, origin, or source. The Supreme Consciousness, as known by Śivādvayavādins, is the *bīja*. For it has been stated in the **Śiva-Sūtra**:

बीजावधानम् ॥

ŚSū III.15

(He should give) full attention to the seed (the source of the world).

While explaining the above *sūtra*, Kṣemarāja writes in his commentary:

बीजं विश्वकारणं स्फुरत्तात्मा पराशक्तिः ... तत्र परशक्त्यात्मनि बीजे, अवधानं भूयो भूयश्चित्तनिवेशनं कार्यम् ।

ŚSūVim III.15

Bija means the source of the universe – the active Light of consciousness, the highest *Śakti* ... The *yogī* should direct his attention again and again to *parā śakti* which is the source of the universe. (Tr. J. Singh)

In the Tantras and Āgamas *bīja* is associated with *mantra*, hence with the letters. Two co-related terms are often discussed in the Āgamas. They are *bīja* and *yonī*, the one is the seed and the other is the receptacle of seeds, in the context of the letters of the Sanskrit alphabet.

बीजयोन्यात्मकान्देदाद् द्विधा बीजं स्वरा मताः ॥

कादिभिश्च स्मृता योनिः ... ।

MvT III.10cd-11a

Syllables are of two types, viz. *bīja* and *yonī* (seed and receptacle of seeds). Seeds are known as vowels, while *yonī* is known as consonants beginning from *k* and others.

They shine as *vācaka* and *vācya* respectively. Originally the entire universe

shines in the mirror of consciousness by means of its freedom known as reflective consciousness (*āmarśana*). The nature of *āmarśana* is speech or sound. It goes on sounding, steadily abiding in the core of the heart of every living being.

The sound primeval, after devouring or withdrawing the entire universe within, remains established in itself as the seed (vowels) and seedlings (consonants) (*kavalīkṛta niḥśeṣa bījāṅkuratayā sthitā*).

The **Tantrasāra** echoes the same idea thus:

षोडशकं परामर्शानां बीजस्वरूपमुच्यते ।

TSā III

The group of sixteen, i.e. vowels, is said to be the indicatory sound of those known as consonants.

The specific reason why vowels are designated as the seed is stated by Abhinavagupta in the following verse:

संविदामीषणादीनामनुद्धिन्नविशेषकम् ॥

यज्ज्ञेयमात्रं तद्वीजं यद्योगाद्वीजता स्वरे ।

TĀI III.85cd-86ab

When in consciousness *iṣaṇa* and others (as objects to be willed) have not yet shown any differentiation, i.e. have not developed with their distinctive features, then it, i.e. consciousness alone shines as the highest knowable object. Because of its association with the vowels, they have the nature of seed.

The will (*icchā*) of the Lord is the impelling force which impels others to become manifest. The most essential thing to be known is consciousness. Its nature is unlimited and free from differentiation. But everything that manifests externally, shines only by the free will of the Lord, for this reason this very will (*icchā*) is called the primary cause. Being impelled by the will the vowels are able to give birth to all consonants.

In the **Vākyapadiya** Bhartṛhari states that a series of sounds (*nāda*) are the agents which sow the seed of words in the intellect in the form of *bhāvanā* (impression) which, when it attains maturity, conceives the word.

With reference to two types of initiation (*dikṣā*) depending on the nature of the disciple and his desire, it is stated in the **Tantrāloka**.

लोकधर्मी फलाकांक्षी शुभस्थश्चाशुभोज्जितः ।

TĀI XV.24ab

The disciple (who likes to enjoy the pleasure of worldly life) has tendency of doing social work, has the desire for attainment of good fruits, remains steady in moral value and avoids what is immoral.

The *nirbīja* form of initiation is only given to people as described in the above verse. The teacher is the supreme authority in ascertaining the competency of the disciple to receive this form of initiation. For the purpose of such form of initiation the teacher purifies all sorts of *saṃskāras* lying latent in him and unifies him with Śiva, while in *saḃīja* form of initiation his *prārabdha* remains unpurified.

Nirbīja initiation has the highest potency for it is stated in the **Tantrāloka**:

समयाचारपाशं तु निर्बीजायां विशोधयेत् ।
दीक्षामात्रेण मुक्तिः स्याद्भक्त्या देवे गुरौ सदा ॥
सद्योनिर्वाणदा सेयं निर्बीजा येति भण्यते ।
अतीतानागतारब्धपाशत्रयवियोजिका ॥

TĀI XV.31-32

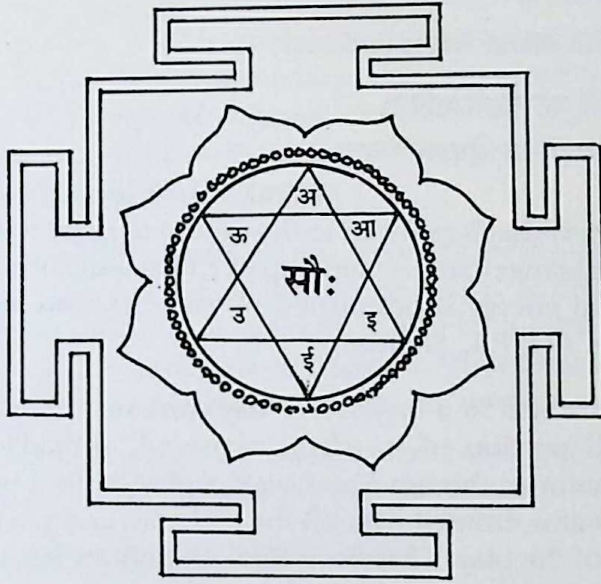
The bond characterised by the code of conduct (*samayācāra*) should be purified for those who are to be given the seedless form of initiation. As soon as one is given such a form of initiation, one attains release but so long one's body does not fall off, one always shows reverence to the divine *guru*. This only is one's code of conduct (*samaya*) and nothing else.

What is called *nirbīja* (seedless) is the giver of release immediately. It is characterised by untying of three kinds of bonds lying in the soul as deeds done in the past, in the future and that have commenced to give fruit in the present state.

While giving initiation the spiritual guide utters in the right ear of the initiate some monosyllabic *mantra* which is generally known as *bījamantra*. It is considered that as a seed of grain one day sprouts, so this *bīja* has the potency of leading the aspirant in crossing the ocean of suffering and finally helps him to attain his innate blissful nature.

When drawing a *cakra* or *maṇḍala* (sacred diagram), it is the practice of Tantric ritual to draw the letters of the *bīja* (*akṣara* or *mantra*) on the parts of the diagram, such as the lotus-petals. The *bīja* thus expands in the geometric form and it helps the meditator to concentrate on the *varṇa* form of the deity or divine energy.

The seed-syllable *sauḥ* is also called *amṛta-bīja* (seed of immortality), represented in a *yantra* with the six basic vowels (called *bīja*), that creates the entire universe. The central seed (*sauḥ*) represents both the immanent and the transcendent aspects of the Supreme as is shown by the two intersecting triangles. The seed being of composite nature contains *sa*, *au* and *visarga* which stands for the universe, the dynamic *Śakti* and Śiva, the all-blissful Supreme.



एकं सृष्टिमयं बीजम् । TĀI XXXII.64a
There exists only a single creative seed.

Manifestation in the Arts

In the context of the arts *bīja* is most prominently used in drama. While describing the constituent elements of the dramatic plot Bharata writes:

बीजं बिन्दुः पताका च प्रकरी कार्यमेव च ।
अर्थप्रकृतयः पञ्च ज्ञात्वा योज्या यथाविधि ॥

NŚ XIX.21

Bīja, *bindu*, *patākā*, *prakārī* and *kārya*, these five *arthaprakṛtis* (causes in the attainment of fruit) are to be employed accordingly.

(Tr. P.L. Sharma)

Bīja (seed) is that which is manifested in a seminal way, as a hint, which is later developed and which culminates in fruit.

The five → *sandhis* (junctions or points) in a drama are defined in terms of different states of *bīja*. The *bīja* originates in the *mukhasandhi* (*yatra bījasamutpattiḥ*) and goes on sprouting (*bījasyodghāṭanam yatra*) throughout the *pratimukha sandhi* but fully sprouts in the *garbha sandhi* (*garbhanirbhinna*). Its progress towards

fruition is checked by unforeseen obstacles (*vilobhanakṛta krodhavyasanaja*) in the *vimarśa sandhi*, and finally transforms itself into fruit in the *nirvahaṇa sandhi* (cf. AbhiBhā XIX).

In the **Bhāva Prakāśana** *bīja* is defined:

गुणभूतात्मके बीजे कारणार्थसमन्विते ।
सर्वव्याप्ता पराशक्तिरस्मिन् क्षेत्रज्ञतामियात् ॥

BhPrak VII.10 (line No. 27-28)

In the *bīja* (seed) that is reduced to the nature of *guṇa* (chief quality of all existing beings) and is made up of the causal substances, the transcendental energy is permeated all through and reaches the state of being. (Tr. P.L. Sharma)

Bīja is the germ which in a very subtle way contains the entire potentiality within and a small portion of it, when, scattered, spreads in multifarious directions. In dramaturgy, though *bīja* starts the play, it does not end there – it spreads over or remains diffused over all the activities and particularly in every action of the hero of the play. Therefore Bharata defines *bīja* thus:

स्वल्पमात्रं समुद्दिष्टं बहुधा यद्विसर्पति ।
फलावसानं तच्चैव बीजं तत्परिकीर्तितम् ॥

NŚ XIX.22

Bīja is known to be that, when a small portion of it is scattered all over (the field), it spreads in many directions and its finality occurs only after the attainment of the result (*phalāvasānam*).

Bhoja has given an interpretation of the above verse thus:

कथाशरीरव्यापिनि नायके कर्तरि कर्मणि वा अवतिष्ठमानं आरम्भो बीजमुच्यते, यथा रामचरितं शिशुपालवध इति । एतेन नायिका अपि व्याख्याताः यथा लक्ष्मीस्वयंवरः, सुभद्राहरणमिति । बीजमिव च बीजम् । यथा बीजमुत्तमङ्कुरमूलप्रकाण्डपत्रस्कन्धशाखा-प्ररोहपल्लवपुष्पादिना प्रकारेण बहुधा विसर्पदन्ते फलाय कल्पयते, तथा यो महावाक्यार्थो नायकोपनायकानुनायकप्रतिनायकसुहृत्सहायादि व्यापारभेदाद्बहुधा विसर्पन्नन्ते फलाय जायते, स बीजमुच्यते ।

ŚrPrak XII (P. 482)

The origin (*ārambha*) incurred in the hero remaining throughout the drama (*kathāśarīra vyāpin*) as its subject or object is called *bīja* the germ; as for example the account of Rāma in the Śīsupālavadha. Heroines are also meant by this; e.g. Lakṣmī in the Lakṣmīsvayaṃvara or Subhadrā in the Subhadrāharaṇa. It (*bīja*) is like the seed of a corn.

Just as a seed being sown starts to spread in manifold ways, viz. sprout, root, shoots of branch and (gradually) stands in trunk adorned with leaves, branches, twigs and flowers, etc. and finally becomes ready for the fruit. Similarly connotation of the principal sentence (*mahāvākyaārtha*) having been diffused through the activities of many actors like hero (*nāyaka*) secondary hero (*upanāyaka*), assistant hero (*anunāyaka*), villain (*pratināyaka*) and other helping characters like friends, etc. finally reaches in the denouement or dramatic conclusion is termed as *bīja*. (Tr. P. Ghosal)

Bīja in drama may be a statement uttered by the hero, and that very statement is the seed which in the long run brings the utterer to attain his object. *Bīja* is always associated with the fruit, though it may be a long wait, yet finally it is favoured with a fruit. Therefore the saying goes: '*bījād phalaṃ phalād bījam*' – from the seed the fruit follows and from the fruit the seed ensues.

Bīja is the origin of *rasa* which always abides in the poet. From this source all *bhāvas* have their emergence. Bharata writes:

यथा बीजाद् भवेद् वृक्षो वृक्षात् पुष्पं फलं यथा ।

तथा मूलं रसाः सर्वे तेभ्यो भावा व्यवस्थिताः ॥

NŚ VI.38

As from the seed the tree is born and from the tree flowers and fruits are born, in the same way all sorts of *bhāvas* have their firm root in *rasa* (aesthetic pleasure). (Tr. P.L. Sharma)

Abhinavagupta explains the above verse in a beautiful metaphor:

तदेवं मूलं बीजस्थानीयः कविगतो रसः । कविर्हि सामाजिकतुल्य एव । ततो वृक्षस्थानीयं काव्यम् । तत्र पुष्पादिस्थानीयोऽभिनयादिनटव्यापारः । तत्र फलस्थानीयः सामाजिकरसास्वादः ।

AbhiBhā on NŚ VI.38

Thus the root representing the seed lies embedded as aesthetic pleasure (*rasa*) in the poet. The poet, indeed, is an aesthete. Poetry or any artistic creation represents the tree. The action of the dramatis personae and others (*abhinayādi*) stand for flowers and others (of the tree). The enjoyment of *rasa* (aesthetic pleasure) by the aesthetes stands for the fruit.

The implication of cause as the seed is also given in the context of music, where the two most important types of song in ancient music, *vardhamāna* and *āsārīta*, are put in the relationship of seed and tree:

वर्धमानशरीरस्य भवेदासारितस्य च ।
 कार्यकारणभावेन परस्परविकल्पनम् ॥
 यथा वृक्षो भवेद् बीजाद् वृक्षाद् बीजस्य संभवः ।
 अन्योन्यहेतुसंयोगात् प्रत्येतव्यस्तथेह तु ॥

NŚ XXXI.92-93

The body of *vardhamāna* and *āsārīta* is mutually constructed through the relationship of cause and effect. Just as the tree is born out of the seed and the seed is born out of the tree, similarly here also (the structure of *vardhamāna* and *āsārīta*) should be understood in terms of mutual relationship of cause (and effect). (Tr. P.L. Sharma)

In music the syllables of the Sanskrit alphabet are used as solfa syllables. In this context, just as in *mantraśāstra*, the vowels are called *bīja*, e.g. 'a' is *haribīja*, 'i' is *kāmabīja*, etc. (cf. BrD 66-74).

Conclusion

In conclusion it may be stated that the term *bīja* implies a continuity from vegetal to animal and human life, reaching even to the transcendental level. Whether it is taken to be the primary cause or the germ of life, it is simply a minute drop (*bindu*) which contains its dynamism within.

Life begins with the seed and it permeates the beings in all their expressions of enjoyment of beauty, their mundane and supermundane desires. The seed within the being activates it to flourish in beauty and strength, and expresses itself as best as it can. Just as a small dot or point expresses itself in lines and then into a triangle in which to include the entire universe with its manifold diversity, in the same way *bīja* though microscopic includes the macrocosm and represents the universe in itself. It starts from a single point, then develops, attains its finality through multifarious expressions, but when the ingoing journey begins everything turns back to the original source, the *bīja*. The creative force which once impelled it and put it on the path of development brings it back again to the source. In Tantric literature it has been beautifully described that *a*, the seed of all Sanskrit syllables expresses itself as *a ha m*, that is 'I', finds its fulfillment when *m* begins to recede and turns to dissolve itself in *a*, the source. The drama of human life is, therefore, the play of *bīja*, that is, the play of involution and evolution, creation and withdrawal. It is not a static energy but the unity of the static and dynamic both.

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LAKṢAṆA

Overview

Lakṣaṇa (mfñ.) is a term of wide significance: on the one hand it denotes observation, sight, and seeing and on the other a mark, sign, token, symbol, characteristic lineament, attribute and quality. As an accurate description it is especially a definition and illustration (in all the disciplines), a symptom (of a disease), an auspicious or inauspicious mark on the body (in Medicine and Astrology). It also means the act of aiming at, aim, goal, scope and object. Further, it means indicating, expressing indirectly. Occurring in a pair of terms such as *sālakṣaṇya* (similarity) and *vailakṣaṇya* (dissimilarity, contrariety, difference), it refers to a common or a peculiar characteristic and attribute respectively.

In philosophical terms such as *lakṣaṇa-pariṇāma* (change in time-variation), *sāmānyalakṣaṇā* and *jñānalakṣaṇā pratyāsatti* (universal-marked and knowledge-marked sense-object contacts), *svalakṣaṇa* and *lakṣaṇa-śūnyatā*, *lakṣaṇa* refers to a specific and distinguishing characteristic.

In the arts it refers to iconographic requirement, sign, symbol, attribute and characteristic lineament.

In literature thirty-six *lakṣaṇas* are spoken of; these are comparable to → *alaṅkāras* (figures of speech). They are beautifying elements of → *kāvya* (poetic composition) and belong to the body of *kāvya* and have no independent existence because they are inbuilt in the body of *kāvya* (*alaṅkāras* are also beautifying elements of *kāvya*, but they are considered to be independent of the body of *kāvya*, having a separate entity like ornaments). Alternatively, they have been explained as situations or points in the plot of the *kāvya*. Just as auspicious marks indicate the greatness and the beauty of great ones, so also these *lakṣaṇas* are so many points in the development of the plot, beautifying the story; as beautifier of the text they are called *lakṣaṇas*. According to some exponents of Sanskrit poetics, the poetic expression as a whole, written in accordance with *rasa*, is called *lakṣaṇa*. It is nothing but choosing of the beautiful mode of expression (*abhidhāvyāpāra*) of the poet's language intended to evoke → *rasa*.

The sense of *lakṣaṇa* as indicating or expressing indirectly may be seen fully developed in the concept of *lakṣaṇā* (secondary power of word). The grammarians, logicians, mīmāṃsakas and ālaṅkārikas maintain that the function by which the primary intrinsic meaning (*mukhyārtha* or *śakyārtha*) of a word is known, is called *abhidhā* (denotation). Thus, the concept of 'cow' is given by the word 'cow' by its power of denotation, when the primary meaning of the word is incompat-

ible, another power called *lakṣaṇā* or indication (i.e. transference of sense), operates, whereby another meaning connected with the primary meaning itself is apprehended either through usage (*rūḍhi*) or from some special motive (*prayojana*). Thus, one can say 'the country rejoices', but since the country itself cannot rejoice, it is indicated that the people of the country rejoice. In literature, *lakṣaṇā* has been deeply associated with metaphorical expression.

Thus *lakṣaṇa* as creative expression is imbued with the process of observing the reality, realizing through deep concentration of mind or meditation (*samādhi* or *yoga*) the very characteristic nature of it and again expressing it either in a metaphorical way, because direct expression does not cope with the total inherent meaning, or in some other indirect way, for the reason that the intensity of the situation can best be realised through creative distortion.

Etymology

The term *lakṣaṇa* is derived from the root *lakṣ-* (*curādi*) to mark, to characterize, to define and it means that by which something is known (*lakṣyate jñāyate anena iti lakṣaṇam* – *lakṣ + lyuṭ = ana* or *lakṣeraṭ ca* – UṇSū III.7). It is in this sense mark, sign, token, characteristic, distinctive feature and indication. It also means name, appellation, designation and definition derived from the same root. It means observation, perception, sight, seeing, recognition derived from the same root or from *lakṣ-* (*bhṡādi*) with the suffix *lyuṭ = ana*. However, the meanings derived from root *lakṣ-* in causative are dominant. *Lakṣmī* (f.) and *lakṣman* (n.), other terms of the same stock, also mean a mark, sign, characteristic, etc.

Development of the Concept

Lakṣmī (f.) denoting a mark, sign, token and fortune occurs first in the *R̥gveda* (cf. RV X.71.2). It occurs more usually in the Vedas and other classical Sanskrit together with *bhadra* and *puṇya* meaning a good sign, fortune, prosperity, success, happiness, beauty and lustre. The *Yajurveda* (XXXI.22) refers to *Lakṣmī* along with *Śrī* as the goddess of fortune and beauty and as the consort of Viṣṇu. Here *lakṣmī* is apparently associated with a visible mark of prosperity. *Lakṣman* (n.) also occurs in the sense of mark, sign, characteristic, etc. in the *Atharvaveda* (VI.141.2) and the *Taittirīya Saṃhitā* (VII.4.19.2) also.

Lakṣaṇa denotes the mark made on cattle by branding to distinguish ownership. According to the *Maitrāyaṇī Saṃhitā* (IV.2.9, also see GGr̥hSū III.6.5, ŚāṅkhGr̥hSū III.10), it was to be made under the *nakṣatra revatī* clearly because of the property indicated in the name (wealthy) of that *nakṣatra*. *Maitrāyaṇī*

Upaniṣad also speaks of *lakṣaṇa* (VI.31: *śāntādi-lakṣaṇoktaḥ*, also MukUp II.1), as specific characteristic. *Lakṣya* as object of meditation is also found in the **Maitrāyaṇī** (VI.24) and the **Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad** (II.3).

In Paninian grammar, the term *lakṣaṇa* has been employed in a more specific sense, i.e. a rule or *sūtra* composed by the ancient *sūtrakāras*; the term is very frequently used in this sense by Patañjali and later commentators (Mahābh on Pā I.1.3, Vā 10). Caraka (CarSam Sūsthā XXX.31) takes the term as synonym to *śākhā*, *vidyā*, *sūtra*, *jñāna*, *tantra* and *śāstra*. Pāṇini also uses the word in the broader sense of characteristic or sign (Pā II.1.14, cf. also Pā I.4.90 and III.2.12).

The grammarian Bhartṛhari uses the term in the sense of indicated meaning as opposed to denoted meaning (cf. *sambhave vābhidhānasya lakṣaṇam tu na kalpyate*, Vāk II.168), where there is a possibility (of the stem and the suffix) having each its own meaning, it is not right to include the meaning of one in that of another. The commentator Puṇyarāja explains *lakṣaṇa* in the *kārikā* as *upalakṣaṇa*, i.e. implying something that has not been actually expressed, implication of something in addition or any similar object where only one is mentioned; synecdoche of a part for the whole, of an individual for the species (cf. *mantra-grahaṇam brāhmaṇasyāpyupalakṣaṇam*, SiKau on Pā II.4.80).

Śabara explains the term:

लक्ष्यते येन तल्लक्षणम्, धूमो लक्षणमग्रेरिति हि वदन्ति ।

MīmSūBh I.1.2

Lakṣaṇa (sign) means by which something is perceived; as for example, smoke is the sign of fire. (Tr. R.S. Bhattacharya)

Thus *lakṣaṇa* has been equated with *hetu* or *liṅga* in *anumāna*.

Vātsyāyana (NySūBh IV.1.34) explains *lakṣaṇa* as *abhidhāna* or the symbol of the *bhāva* (entity) which distinguishes it, i.e. its name.

Lakṣaṇa as definition gives a sound knowledge of a particular object. So it must be free from all defects and imperfections: *avyāpti* (inadequate extent or pervasion of a proposition, non-inclusion or exclusion of a part of the thing defined), *ativyāpti* (an unwarranted extension of a definition to things not intended to be defined by it, so that it includes such things as ought not to fall under it) and *asambhava* (improbability).

The function of *lakṣaṇa* (definition) is to differentiate the object defined from the things which are of same kind and of a different kind (*sajātīya-vijātīya-bheda-vyāvartana*) on the one hand and facilitating practice (*vyavahāra*) on the other.

It is in this aspect that *lakṣaṇa* means specific attribute (*asādhāraṇa dharma*) or defining attribute.

The definition is twofold: *sāmānya* or general and *viśeṣa* or specific. While the former exists in all things concerned, the latter exists in a few things only.

सामान्यं च विशेषश्च लक्षणस्य द्वयी गतिः ॥

सामान्यं सर्वविषयं विशेषः क्वापि वर्तते ।

AgPur 338.4cd-5ab

Lakṣaṇa (defining attribute) is two-fold: *sāmānya* or general and *viśeṣa* or specific. While the former exists in all things concerned, the latter exists in a few things only. (Tr. R.S. Bhattacharya)

In the *Vaiśeṣika-Sūtra* (I.1.15-17) *lakṣaṇa* stands for 'defining characteristics'; that characteristics which shows the things defined as different from similar or dissimilar things. Śābara also uses the term in the sense of defining attribute (on *MīmSū* III.1.14). Indian Philosophy, especially Advaita Vedānta speaks of two-fold *lakṣaṇas*: 1) *svārūpa lakṣaṇa*— definition presenting the essential nature and 2) *taṭastha lakṣaṇa*— definition referring to secondary or accidental attributes.

In *Sāmudrika-Śāstra* or the discipline of interpreting marks on the body *lakṣaṇa* stands for any mark or feature of body, auspicious or inauspicious. The *Agni Purāṇa* (343.2) describes the marks or signs of good and bad fortune existing on the body of men and women. According to *Sāmudrika-Śāstra* great ones of the world bear on their bodies certain marks which indicate their transcendental qualities and set them apart from lesser mortals. It is used to be the duty of an astrologer to scrutinize the body of a new-born child to see if he possessed such marks. There are said to be 108 *lakṣaṇas* or auspicious outward marks on the human body called *vyāñjana* or 'suggestive ornaments'. Of those 76 are *anu-vyāñjana* or minor ornaments, and 32 *mahā-vyāñjana* or greater ornaments. It is believed that any person having on his body the 32 great signs achieves world-wide fame.

Lord Buddha had great marks (*mahāpuruṣa-lakṣaṇa*) and lesser marks (*anu-vyāñjana*) on his person. The Buddhist, Hindu and Jaina traditions do not give the same particulars of these marks, but in general all refer to the following marks (*lakṣaṇa*):

Twelve are the permanent signs of the great ones: (1) curling hair; (2) long ears and long pendant earlobes; (3) long arms; (4) palms with weblike lines; (often shown in sculptures of the Buddha); (5) the *uṣṇīṣa*, a slight protuberance on the top of the head, extremely hot to the touch; (6) the *ūrṇā*, 'wool', a twist of hair between the eyebrows, or a small curl on the forehead; (7) the *śrīvatsa*, a special mark, either circular, *svastika*-shaped, floral, or polygonal, formed by a curl of hair, or a mole, generally on the right side of the breast. It is often shown on statues of Buddha, Kṛṣṇa, and Viṣṇu, and the Jaina *tīrthaṅkaras*; (8) the sign

of the wheel, lotus or *svastika* on the right breast; (9) the sign of the wheel and lotus on the palms and soles of the feet (for great saints); (10) the sign of the discus on the palms and soles of the feet (for great rulers); (11) the sign of a flag, iron goad, barley seed or *svastika* on the right side of the body; (12) the signs of the rainbow, triangle, water-pot, crescent, fish, cows' footprint, on the left side of the body (cf. *DīghNik* III.142, *SutNip* V.1.25 (1000), *LVi* VII.116 (P.T.S.), *BoCar* IV.37).

In Vaisnavite tradition *śrīvatsa*, a mark or curl of the hair on the breast of Viṣṇu appears as an auspicious mark. In *śrīgārarasa*, Śrī Kṛṣṇa is said to be attractive, powerful, sweet, an excellent orator and an appealing speaker and one who is possessed of all the auspicious signs as well as fresh youth (cf. *UjNīl* I.5).

In Āyurveda *lakṣaṇa* stands for manifested signs and symptoms of disease. *Ākṛti*, *cihna*, *saṁsthāna*, *vyāñjana*, *rūpa* and *liṅga* stand as synonyms of *lakṣaṇa*.

प्रादुर्भूतलक्षणं पुनर्लिङ्गम् । तत्र लिङ्गमाकृतिर्लक्षणं चिह्नं संस्थानं व्यञ्जनं
रूपमित्यनर्थान्तरम् ॥

CarSam NiSthā I.9

Liṅga consists of the manifested signs and symptoms of the disease.

Ākṛti, *lakṣaṇa*, *cihna*, *saṁsthāna*, *vyāñjana* and *rūpa* – these are synonyms of *liṅga*. (Tr. P.V. Sharma)

Lakṣaṇa is also called *nidāna* due to their investigating the (pathological) causes and symptoms of disease. They are sixteen in number (*SuSam SūSthā* III.14). *Ḍalhaṇa* explains *lakṣaṇas* as the factors which inform about disease such as pre-monitory symptoms, symptoms, therapeutic suitability and pathogenesis. In a more specific sense, *lakṣaṇa* stands in Āyurveda for the sign by which manhood is known, i.e. male organ.

The concept *lakṣaṇa* figures among some of the key concepts of different systems of Indian philosophy. The import of *lakṣaṇa* is very significant in the Sāṃkhya-Yoga concept of *lakṣaṇa pariṇāma*. At every moment the objects of the world are undergoing change. This change is stated to be threefold in Sāṃkhya-Yoga philosophy as: (1) *dharma-pariṇāma* (change of aspect), (2) *lakṣaṇa-pariṇāma* (change in time-variation) and (3) *avasthā-pariṇāma* (change of state). Of these *dharma-pariṇāma* speaks of change that an element undergoes through its various manifestations. It is the change of aspect while the original substance remains constant. Just as when a lump of gold is turned into bracelets, rings, or bangles, what happens is that it assumes different shapes in passing through its different aspects, while the gold itself remains intact. *Lakṣaṇa-pariṇāma* speaks of change of an aspect in time series; it is not the change of the original substance. Thus an aspect when it enters into its present stage from the future one has undergone

a change. At that stage its present aspect only becomes prominent while it is not altogether detached from its past and future stages. These two stages remain latent in it. Similarly, when it enters into its past stage, it is not severed from its present and future stages, and so on. *Avasthā-pariṇāma* is the change of state that an aspect undergoes in every succeeding moment in any of its particular stages in a time series. Thus an aspect when it exists in its present stage is generally held to be new, but even its newness begins to diminish in every succeeding moment. Thus what was brand new becomes new, from new it becomes old, from old it turns into older, and so on. Everywhere the aspect remains the same, but it looks different with the changes in its states.

Thus *lakṣaṇa* in the context of *pariṇāma* (change) in Sāṃkhya-Yoga systems has been employed in the restricted sense of specific characteristics in reference to a particular stage of time, i.e. past, present and future.

Lakṣaṇa in the sense of 'mark' occurs in the terms *sāmānya-lakṣaṇā pratyāsatti* (lit. sense-object contact, *sannikarṣa* marked by universal) and *jñāna-lakṣaṇā pratyāsatti* (lit. knowledge-marked *sannikarṣa*) of Nyāya epistemology. Later Nyāya philosophers speak of three kinds of contact of transcendental nature called *sāmānya-lakṣaṇā*, *jñāna-lakṣaṇā* and *yogaja-lakṣaṇā* (mystical). *Sāmānya-lakṣaṇā* is that contact with a particular by virtue of which we are transcendently in contact with all the particulars in general, in such a way that the corresponding universal may be predicted. Thus when I see smoke and through it my sense is in contact with the universal associated with smoke, my visual sense is in transcendental contact with all smoke in general. *Jñāna-lakṣaṇā* contact is that by virtue of which we can associate the perception of other senses when perceiving through any one sense. Thus when we are looking at a piece of sandal wood our visual sense is in touch with its colour only, but still we perceive it to be fragrant without any direct contact of the object with the organ of smell. The sort of transcendental contact (*alaukika sannikarṣa*), by virtue of which this is rendered possible, is called *jñāna-lakṣaṇā pratyāsatti*.

Lakṣaṇa in *svalakṣaṇa*, a term of Buddhist philosophy, occurs in the sense of features of an object or idea in its own uniqueness. Two stages of perception, the first called *nirvikalpa* (indeterminate) and the second *savikalpa* (determinate) have been accepted in Indian philosophy. The indeterminate perception of a thing is its perception at the first moment of the association of senses and their objects. The cognition that appears first is held to be mere *ālocana* or simple perception called non-determinate, pertaining to the object itself pure and simple, and resembling the cognition that the newborn infant has of things around him. In this cognition neither the genus nor the differentia is presented to consciousness, all that is present there is the individual wherein these two subsist. This view of indeterminate perception may seem in some sense to

resemble the Buddhist view which defines it to be merely specific individuality (*svalakṣaṇa*) and regards it as being the only valid element in perception, whereas all the rest are conceived as being imaginary imposition. Perception thus means to Buddhists the correct presentation through the senses of an object or idea (in *Vijñānavāda*) in its own uniqueness as containing only those features which are its and its alone (*svalakṣaṇa*).

Lakṣaṇa in *lakṣaṇa śūnyatā*, another term of Buddhist philosophy, means special characteristics. The voidness or nothingness (*śūnyatā*) of things may be viewed from seven aspects, *lakṣaṇa-śūnyatā* is one of them. Things are always interdependent, and hence have no special characteristics by themselves, and as they cannot be determined in themselves they cannot be determined in terms of others, for, their own nature being undetermined, a reference to an 'other' is also undetermined, and hence they are indefinable (*lakṣaṇaśūnya*).

Thus it is apparent that the word *lakṣaṇa* occurs in some concepts of Indian philosophy in the sense of specific or distinguishing characteristics and uniqueness of things. This sense of the term *lakṣaṇa* appears to be its core-meaning and it permeates the entire realm of Indian Śāstras and has been expanded into mark, sign, symptom, symbol, definition, theory, and so on.

Manifestation in the Arts

The Āgamas, Purāṇas, later Upaniṣads, and treatises on Vāstu and Śilpa speak of *lakṣaṇa* of the images, temples ($\rightarrow$ *prāsāda*), etc. An artist has to obey a hieratic canon. All the qualities and attributes which are inherent in the nature of a deity are symbolized by the different qualities and attributes of his image. The image of the deity is merely a group of symbols and no elements of its form should be the fruit of the inventiveness of an image-maker. Every peculiarity of the attitude, of expression or of ornament is of significance and intended as a fit object for meditation. An adherence to the 'characteristics' prescribed in a canon facilitates the artistic expression quite in conformity with the whole world view realized by the artist. Thus the **Viṣṇudharmottara Purāṇa** emphasizes the adherence to the *lakṣaṇas* prescribed in the canons in making and worshipping of the images:

तस्मात् सर्वप्रयत्नेन सुरार्चा लक्षणान्विताम् ।

कारयेत् पूजनं विद्वान् न त्वलक्षणसंयुताम् ॥

VDhPur III.1.11

Hence the wise man should worship images of gods endowed with all the features with effort, and never (worship) those devoid of (prescribed) features.

An image-maker must realize complete self-identification with the deity and whatever peculiarities are associated with him. The *Śukranītisāra* states clearly the significance of *lakṣaṇas* prescribed in the canons:

"One should make use of (*yojayet*) the visual-formulae (*dhyāna*) proper to the angels (*devatā*) whose images are to be made (*ārambhya*). It is for the successful accomplishment of this practice (*yoga*) of visual formulation (*dhyāna*) that the lineaments (*lakṣaṇa*) of images are prescribed. The human imager (*pratimākāra*) should be expert in this visual contemplation, since thus, and in no other way, and verily not by direct observation (*pratyakṣa*), (can this end be achieved)." (ŚNSā IV.4.70-71; tr. Anand K. Coomaraswamy, quoted in: *The Transformation of Nature in Art*, p. 113.)

The *Samarāṅgaṇa-Sūtradhāra* includes *lakṣaṇa* in the 'eight limbs' of painting, i.e. "*vartikā* (the crayon), *bhūmibandhana* (? preparation ground), *rekha-karmāṇi* (outline work), *lakṣaṇa* (characteristic lineament of the types), *karṣa-karma* (production, perhaps '*varṇa-karma*'-colouring), *vartanā-karma* (shading, that is indication of plastic modelling, relieve), *lekha-karaṇa* (? corrections), and *dvika-karma* (? final outlines)." (Quoted by Anand K. Coomaraswamy, in *The Transformation of Nature in Art*, p. 182.) *Lakṣaṇa* has been viewed in close association with → *māna* or *pramāṇa* (measure, mete, metre, canon of proportion). An artist has to adhere to both the norms of *lakṣaṇa* as well as to *pramāṇa*.

Lakṣaṇa in poetics stands for poetic characteristics which determine the difference between ordinary speech and poetry. *Kāvya* finds treatment at the hand of Bharata under *Vācikābhinaya* chapter. The text of the play has been viewed as the body of *nāṭya*. This drama text is *kāya* in the *Nāṭya-Śāstra*. As Bharata says, the *kāya* should have 36 *lakṣaṇas* (cf. NŚ XV.227). In chapter XVI, he gives a list of 36 *lakṣaṇas* and defines each. At the end of the enumeration he calls them resembling adornment to *kāvya-bhūṣaṇa*. He does not illustrate these as he does in case of *chandas* and *alaṅkāras*. He does not specify their place in *kāvya* and does not define their difference from *alaṅkāra*. This concept of *lakṣaṇa*, though dealt with in later literature on poetics and dramaturgy, has not been elaborated by the later writers. Abhinavagupta, the celebrated commentator (on NŚ), opens his exposition on the topic by observing that, as a topic of poetics, it is quite unfamiliar, *aprasiddha*. Many of them look like *alaṅkāras* and some actually go by names which are *alaṅkāras* in later literature. There is no clear grasp of the exact nature of *lakṣaṇa* in the few writers on dramaturgy who treat of it. It would seem, that Bharata considers *lakṣaṇa* of greater importance than *alaṅkāras* by mentioning them first and by giving thirty-six of them. The thirty-six names are as follows:

विभूषणं चाक्षरसंहतिश्च शोभाभिमानौ गुणकीर्तनं च ।
 प्रोत्साहनोदाहरणे निरुक्तं गुणानुवादोऽतिशयःसहेतुः ॥
 सारूप्यमिथ्याध्यवसायसिद्धिपदोच्च्याक्रन्दमनोरथाश्च ।

आख्यानयाच्चाप्रतिषेधपृच्छादृष्टान्तनिर्भासनसंशयाश्च ॥
 आशीः प्रियोक्तिः कपटः क्षमा च प्राप्तिश्च पश्चात्तपनं तथैव ।
 अर्थानुवृत्तिर्ह्युपपत्तियुक्ती कार्योऽनुनीतिः परिदेवनं च ॥
 षट्त्रिंशदेतानि तु लक्षणानि प्रोक्तानि वै भूषणसंमितानि ।
 काव्येषु भावार्थगतानि तज्ज्ञैः सम्यक्प्रयोज्यानि यथारसं तु ॥

NS XVI.1-4

Ornateness (*vibhūṣaṇa*), compact non-brevity (*akṣarasam̐hati*), brilliance (*śobhā*), self-conceit (*abhimāna*), enumeration of merits (*guṇakīrtana*), instigation (*protsāhana*), comparison (*udāharaṇa*), convincing explanation (*nirukta*), description of virtues (*guṇānuvāda*), excellence (*atīśaya*), causation (*sahetu*), identity (*sārūpya*), wrong perseverance (*mithyādhyavasāya*), accomplishment (*siddhi*), multiplex predication (*padoccaya*), invocation (*ākṛanda*), mental desire (*manoratha*), narration (*ākhyāna*), prayer for something (*yācñā*), censure (*pratiśedha*), interrogation (*pr̥cchā*), simile (*dṛṣṭānta*), illuminating (*nirbhāsaṇa*), doubt (*saṁśaya*), blessing (*āśīḥ*), complement (*priyokti*), deceit (*kapata*), forbearance (*kṣamā*), attainment (*prāpti*), repentance (*paścāttapaṇa*), resembling same meaning (*arthānuvṛtti*), evidence (*upapatti*), reasoning (*yukti*), action (*kārya*), meditation (*anunīti*), and lamentation (*paridevana*) – above cited thirty-six *lakṣaṇas* (features) are considered as adornments (of composition). These should be employed (in a drama) properly by expert aesthetes in accordance with subject matter and sentiment of *kāvya*. (Tr. P. Ghosal)

Each of these terms would require a separate explanation which is not possible in a short space. These *lakṣaṇas* enunciated by Bharata are comparable to *alaṅkāras* (figures of speech) inasmuch as they transform ordinary language into poetic language. They are the distinguishing features of poetic language from the languages for ordinary usage. They may be taken to be beautifying elements of *kāvya* like embellishing *kāvya-alaṅkāras* with the distinction that *lakṣaṇas* are in-built or intrinsic to the body (language and sense or idea) of poetry, whereas *alaṅkāras* are taken to be relatively extrinsic to it. However, the metaphor of the human body, distinguishing auspicious marks on it, ornaments and so on in explaining the nature of *lakṣaṇa* and *alaṅkāra* had been questioned, and Abhinavagupta refers to an interesting *prima facie* view in this regard and answers it thus:

(ननु) काव्यबन्धाः षट्त्रिंशल्लक्षणान्विताः कर्तव्या इत्युक्तं, तत्र गुणालङ्कारादिरिति वृत्तयश्चेति काव्येषु प्रसिद्धो मार्गो, लक्षणानि तु न प्रसिद्धानि, किं च पुरुषस्येव काव्यस्य लक्षण गुणालङ्कारव्यवहारो न युक्तः पुरुषस्य शरीरचैतन्यभेदात् कटकादीनां ततोऽपि

भेदात्, काव्यस्य पुनर्विरचनकाले प्रतिपत्तिकाले वा प्रापकसत्तायां तेषामगणितत्वाच्च ।
दण्डिनापि-

“काव्यशोभाकरान् धर्मानलङ्कारान् प्रचक्षते”

इति ब्रुवता गुणमध्य एव तत्र प्रसादादीनभिदधता च गुणालङ्कारविभागोऽप्यसम्भवीति
सूचितं भवति ।

सत्यमेतत्, किंतु विरचनविवेचनसामर्थ्यसमर्थनायावश्यं काल्पनिकोऽपि विभाग
आश्रयणीयः । इह गुणास्तावद् आत्मनि चिन्मये शृङ्गारादौ वर्तन्ते, शृङ्गारे चावश्यं
लक्ष्यत इति पृथक्सिद्धत्वादलङ्कारः, शरीरनिष्ठमेव यत्पदम् अपृथक्सिद्धं तल्लक्षणम्, येन
शरीरस्य सौन्दर्यं जायते । तच्च सिद्धरूपं साध्यरूपं वा, यथा श्यामेति, मदमन्थरगामिनीति
च । एतदेव लक्षणं, तच्चालङ्क्रियते । अलङ्कारैर्युक्तं काव्यं लक्षणैर्विना न शोभते ।
क्रियावाच्योपमेयभेदेन तदेतल्लक्षणं द्विधेति यथा ‘श्यामा विशालाक्षी’, ‘मत्तमातङ्गगामिनी’
इति च ।

AbhiBhā on NŚ XVI.1-4

“Objection – It has been said that the poetic compositions should be made, incorporating the thirty-six *lakṣaṇas*. Now, *guṇas* and *alaṅkāras* as well as *vyrttis* are well known in the ‘path’ (system) of *kāvya* (literature). But *lakṣaṇas* are not well-known. Moreover, *lakṣaṇas* (special signs on body), *guṇas* (psychological qualities) and *alaṅkāras* (ornaments) of the human being cannot be applied to *kāvya* (literature) because in the human being the body and the intelligent principles are differentiated and ornaments like bracelets etc. are further differentiated, but these are not counted separately in the composition or apprehension of *kāvya*. Daṇḍin also has included *prasāda* (clarity) etc. under *guṇa* when he has said: “*alaṅkāras* are the qualities that lend beauty to *kāvya*” and this statement also implies that *guṇas* and *alaṅkāras* cannot be differentiated.

Answer – This is true, but differentiation (referred to above) has to be accepted even though it is imaginary, in order to acquire the capacity to discriminate (among the various components of) the creative process. (According to this discrimination) *guṇas* reside in the intelligent principle (*rasa*) equated to *ātman*, *śṛṅgāra*, etc., *alaṅkāra* is so called because its existence is independent (of the body and the intelligent principle); *lakṣaṇa* is that which has no independent existence because it is in-built in the body. The beauty of the body comes into existence because of *lakṣaṇa*. It (*lakṣaṇa*) is an accomplished thing or a process. For example, the statement ‘she

is a *śyāmā* (beautiful lady)' gives an accomplished fact, but she is one whose gait is beautiful because of *mada* (intoxication) is a process. This is *lakṣaṇa* and it is ornamented. A *kāvya* full of *alaṅkāras* but devoid of *lakṣaṇa* is not beautiful. This *lakṣaṇa* is twofold according to its association with an action alongwith a simile or an object, e.g. 'the *Śyāmā* has big eyes' and she has a gait like that of an intoxicated elephant. (Tr. P.L. Sharma)

Abhinavagupta further gives a number of views held by earlier writers in his commentary on *Nāṭya-Śāstra*, and numbers them as ten. These ten views may be compressed into three different interpretations of Bharata's idea of *lakṣaṇa*.

They are beautifying elements of the body of *kāvya*. As such they are different from *alaṅkāra* in respect to the fact that they are more comprehensive. They are not a separate entity like *alaṅkāra*, but are *apṛthaksiddha* or inbuilt in the body of *kāvya* itself. By themselves they grace the *kāvya* while *alaṅkāra* is added to it for extra beauty.

Another view of *lakṣaṇa* does not bring them at all in relation to *kāvya* in general, nor does it take them, like *alaṅkāra*, as a beautifying factor, but it associates them with drama and its several situations in the development of the plot. Just as the auspicious marks on the body indicate the greatness and beauty of great ones, so also these *lakṣaṇas*, which are so many points in the development of the plot, beautify the story. As beautifier of the text of the play and indicator of the excellence of poetry, they are called *lakṣaṇas*. In this view, they have been identified with *sandhyaṅgas* or *itivṛtta-khaṇḍalakas* (→ *nāṭya*).

In a third view, *lakṣaṇas* have been explained in terms of a creative process identifying them with *kavi-vyāpāra*. According to this view the poetic imagination (→ *pratibhā*) has three functions and three corresponding vibrations (*pariṣpanda*) of *pratibhā* (poetic imagination). In the first vibration of his poetic imagination a poet conceives the *rasa* and its *guṇas*, e.g. *śṛṅgāra* and its *guṇa mādhyura* (sweetness). The second vibration of the poetic imagination affects the introduction of *alaṅkāras* and the third consists in choosing the appropriate words and ideas. The effect of this third function is the actual body of poetry suggesting the presence of the *guṇas*, *śleṣa*, etc. Thus the natural beauty of *Kāvya-Śāstra* (body of poetry), which is not covered by the beauty effected by *alaṅkāra* is what is called *lakṣaṇa*. *Lakṣaṇas* as *kavi-vyāpāra* are the infinite ways of beautiful expressions in *kāvya*.

Udbhaṭa, Lollaṭa, Śaṅkuka and Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka may have dealt with the concept of *lakṣaṇa* while commenting on Bharata, but their views are not available due to the loss of their commentaries (on NŚ). Bhaṭṭa Tauta, the celebrated teacher of Abhinavagupta, definitely dealt with the topic, whose

tradition has been inherited by Abhinavagupta. In the post-Abhinava era Bhoja's *Śṛṅgāra-Prakāśa* enumerates, defines, and illustrates, not thirty-six but sixty-nine *lakṣaṇas*, and terms them as *nāṭyālaṅkāras*. Kumbhakarna, Sarveśvara, Siṅgabhūpāla and Viśvanātha also deal with the *lakṣaṇas* and ancient commentators on Sanskrit plays such as Rāghavabhaṭṭa, Jagaddhara and Rucipati identify the application of some of them in the plays.

Though Daṇḍin considers *lakṣaṇas* to be identical with *alaṅkāras* and some later writers like Bhoja, Śāradātanaya, Siṅgabhūpāla and Viśvanātha narrowed the area by mentioning them only in the context of drama, yet evidently Bharata meant *lakṣaṇa* to be a feature of *kāvya* in general as Abhinavagupta and his teacher Bhaṭṭa Tauta took them. When he uses the expression *nāṭakāśraya* (resting in drama) for them, he means that, as a mark of natural beauty of poetic language, they are essential for the simple verbal expression so vital in theatre.

Conclusion

Thus *lakṣaṇa* is primarily a mark, sign, symbol and distinguishing characteristic or attribute and indication. It assumes a few more specific meanings of auspicious and inauspicious mark, definition, symptom, *hetu* or inference, an aphoristic definition (*sūtra*) and theory in different Śāstras (disciplines). As indication and indirect expression, it unfolds into the concept of *lakṣaṇā* (secondary power of words, transference of sense) on the one hand, and on the other the concept of 'characteristic features' in Vāstu-Śāstra and *citra-lakṣaṇa* (sculpture, architecture and painting) etc. As beautifying element and distinctive feature of poetic language or the body of *kāvya* (*kāvya-śarīra*) or so many points in the development of the plot beautifying the story or infinite ways of poetic expression, they figure as important factors in literature. The pervasiveness of this concept in Indian thought, the arts and aesthetics is self-evident.

Kamaleśh Dutta Tripathi

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ŚILPA

Overview

The term *śilpa* (mn.) designates any kind of arts and crafts in the Indian tradition, and its antiquity is Vedic. It is a pervasive term and includes within the ambit of its meaning anything creative, imitative, ideational, or skilful which in one sense or the other involves dexterity of hand or mind or both. *Śilpa* also implies a technique, a ceremonial act, an artefact, indeed anything which either leads to or is a tangible product of some craft – *kratu* or →*māyā* included. It qualifies an experience or exercise whose product is endowed with →*chandas*, 'rhythm', and yet on occasions, it is beyond explanation and therefore a subject of wonder especially where it creates the cosmic elements; or even an illusion of reality without being it. *Śilpa* also qualifies →*vr̥ttis*, 'occupations', in which are seen the functions of the servile class in ancient Indian society – a class which occupied the lowest rung in the →*varṇa* hierarchy. To a great extent, in early Indian social history *śilpas* are symptomatic of changes that mark a progressive transition of Indian society from egalitarian values to those of differentiation in the social status. In this respect, *śilpas* also indicate the changes that mark the transition of an agrarian system into the moulds of urbanization.

In arts, *śilpa* as a cognate of →*citra* legitimates the identity of an object by its *anukṛti* by inducing into it the →*lakṣaṇa*, →*sādrśya* or →*pramāṇa* of the original. In this manner, it differentiates →*rūpa* or *nāma-rūpa*. Thus in every way, both in connotations and in content, the term has a history which is as varied as it is interesting.

Etymology and Semantical Development

Śilpa, 'skill', 'craft', is of doubtful origin (Monier-Williams, s.v.). The *Nighaṇṭu* (II.1) regards it as one of the twenty-six different names of *karma* 'function', which indicates its association with 'activity'. Devarāja Yajvan explains the term as follows:

शीलयति शीलतीति वा शिल्पम् । 'यत् कुम्भकारादिकर्म' इत्युणादिवृत्तिः । यद्वा शिनोति कर्तारं तनूकरोति दुष्करत्वेनातिक्लेशकरत्वादिति निपातनाद्रूपसिद्धिः "शिञ् निशने" (स्वा० उ) "निशानं तनूकरणं" इति सुबोधिनीकारः ।

Comm. on Nigh II.1

That which is repeatedly practised or studied is *śilpa*, such as the

potter's act etc.; or that act can be explained as *śilpa* which makes the doer reduced (i.e. slim) because it is hard to be accomplished and which gives to the doer a great suffering (of hard work), can be explained as *śilpa* deriving it from the root *śiñ* (of *svādigāṇa ubhayapadī*) which means 'to make slim', 'to whet', according to the author of the commentary Subodhini. (Tr. R.V. Tripathi)

And thus he derives *śilpa* from *śila upadhāraṇe* ('to learn or to retain knowledge'), *śila samādhau* ('to concentrate'), and *śiñ niśane* ('to sharpen' or 'to whet' or 'to make slim'). The **Amara Kośa** (II.10.35) explains it as *śila samādhau* and *śala gatau* ('to move').

Both these etymological derivations of the term *śilpa* are unsatisfactory. Applying the rules of metathesis, Professor V.S. Pathak and Prof. M. Mayrhofer convincingly derive *śilpa* from the root *piś*, to fashion, and its derivatives like *peśas* (RV II.3.6; VII.42.1), *Supēśas* (RV VII.32.13), *piṃś* (RV X.184.1), *peśala* (YV IX.8) and *āpiṃśat* (RV X.110.9) etc., which have the meanings that eventually were encompassed by the term *śilpa*. Thus the derivatives of the Vedic *piś* signifying 'decoration', 'beautiful' and 'adornment' eminently correspond to *su-śilpa* of the **Rgveda** (IX.5.6; X.70.6), and indicate the etymological fit in the derivation. Professor Pathak also draws attention to the Indo-Iranian and Indo-European connections of the root *piś* and *peik* (Latin), *peig* (German) and *feh* (Gothic). Everywhere, the derivatives mean 'embroidering', 'colouring', 'sketching', and 'adornment' which sense is conveyed by *śilpa* too in as much as it qualifies 'beautiful'. We will return to the *piś-śilpa* duo later. First about the different meanings of the term *śilpa* as they occur in the early passages.

In the Vedic texts *śilpa* occurs both in the meaning of a *śāstra* which is 'recited', e.g. *śilpāni śamsanti* (AitBr VI.27), or an act which is performed, e.g. *śilpāni kriyanta* (KauṣBr XXV.12) during the Viśvajit or Agniṣṭoma sacrifice. It occurs in the sense of an 'image' (YV IV.9) or 'counterpart' sometimes specific in colour, e.g. 'dappled' or 'variegated' (YV XXIX.58; XXIV.5). It implies a propensity or a skill instrumental in performance of an act (TSam II.7.15.4; KāthSam XXXVII.8; TĀr I.17). It also signifies 'manifold forms' (ŚBr I.1.4.3) even as in certain contexts it is used as an honorific to designate a *ṛṣi*, sage, e.g. Śilpa Kaśyapa (ŚBr XIV.6.4.33). In the Saṃhitās and Brāhmaṇas, *śilpa* qualifies 'divine' acts or skill (AitBr VI.27; TBr III.3.2.1) because it supports the cosmic elements or brings them into being (KauṣBr XXIX.5; TāṇḍMBr XIV.4.1-9). In its different occurrences in those texts the term is explained variously by Sāyaṇa and Bhaṭṭa Bhāskara Miśra as: *āścaryakaram karman* (an act of wonder); *sūkṣma karma* (subtle act), *hasta viṣaya kauśalam* (an act of manual dexterity), *bahurūpa* (multi-form), *citrarūpa* (variegated form), *kauśala* (dexterity); *karma kauśala* (dexterity of action), *yoga bala* and *sāmarthya* (application, capacity and propen-

sity). Thus contextually the term *śilpa* in its earliest occurrences implies primarily an action and secondarily a mysterious in-dwelling power; a key to generating an act. In both cases it is always creative, sustaining, or strengthening. *Śilpa* in these implications is most closely related to the root *piś-* and the terms derived from it (see below). In later texts, *śilpa* mainly implies craft or skill, and *vr̥tti* 'occupation'; and in a special sense it means image-making (cf. VSUp I.2).

The inheritance of *śilpa* from *piś-* calls for some remarks to underscore the quality of this inheritance. Everywhere in its occurrence *piś-* qualifies beautiful, creative work or what lends grace to a form, or what is tender, adorned, painted, or coloured. The *Nirukta* (VIII.11) interprets *peśa* as *rūpa*: *peśa iti rūpanāma*. This juxtaposition of *peśa* and *→rūpa* is of singular importance in the *R̥gveda* (X.184.1) where Tvaṣṭṛ, the divine artificer, 'adorns' the form which Viṣṇu prepares in the womb. Here, Tvaṣṭṛ is endowed with the power to create or 'fashion' the *rūpa* 'form', a notion that occurs with certain alternations in the later Vedic texts where world is regarded as differentiation of *rūpa* or *nāma-rūpa*. Similarly, Tvaṣṭṛ adorns heaven and earth with beauty, and the act is explained in terms of the root *piś-*:

य इमे द्यावापृथिवी जनित्री रूपैरपिशद्भवानि विश्वा ।

RV. X.110.9ab

(Tvaṣṭṛ) who adorned these two progenitors, i.e. heaven and earth,
and all worlds with beauty. (Tr. L. Sarup)

Inherent in 'fashioning the form' is the suggestion of some technique or perhaps mere will by which the 'form' is created, and its occurrence with the root *sic-* (*āsiñcatu prajāpātir dhātā garbham dadhātu te*; RV X.184.1) reinforces the notion of creation by the divine artificer Tvaṣṭṛ. There are many other roots in the *R̥gveda* suggesting the process or technique of creative work (Pathak and Misra 1986: 280 ff.); *piś-* is only one of them. Deriving from it, *śilpa* assumes the qualities that were implicit in its source. No wonder, the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* (VI.27) regards *śilpa* as the imitation of *deva-śilpa* (divine arts). The extent to which the *piś-śilpa* duo is supposed to capture or create *rūpa* is limitless for conceptually the 'form' itself is limitless, and exists both manifestly and unmanifestly (Misra 1986: 1–12). The creative process is one and the same: only the terms describing it vary from passage to passage. In these variations the roots *taṣ-*, *tvakṣ-*, *mi-*, *sic-*, *rūp-*, *kr-*, and so on, are consistently used in place of *piś-* or *śilpa* which all seem to stand as cognates (Pathak and Misra: op. cit). Thus, in the *R̥gveda* (I.51.10) Uśanā 'fashions' power with power: *taṣad yat ta uśanā sahasā saho*, or the *R̥gveda* (X.119.5) where a poet composes a song as a carpenter makes a chariot; *ahaṃ taṣteva vandhuraṃ paryacāmi hṛdā matim*: or where a song is brightened the way a carpenter makes a piece of wood shine by scraping it. When Indra creates he does so by *māyā* (from the root *mī-*). Thus he achieves the *puru-*

rūpa by *māyā*: *indro māyābhiḥ pururūpa īyate* (RV VI.47.18c). Compare this with a passage from the *Rāmāyaṇa* where *Sītā* is like a golden image created by *māyā*: *hema bimba nibhā saumyā māyeva mayanirmitā* (VI.12.14). In the *Rgveda* (IX.83.3) the place where the universe was formed is supposed to be measured by *māyā*. Sometimes, *rūpa* is created of its own, by itself as in the *Rgveda* (VI.47.18a) where one is described as becoming form in every counterform: *rūpaṃ rūpaṃ pratirūpo babhūva*. All this creative activity is divine, and is attributed to divine personages, like *Uṣas* who like a barber 'fashions' the beauty by pruning the hair: *adhi peśāṃsi vapate nṛtūriṇa* (RV I.92.4a); or to *Brhaspati* of *Aṅgiras* who casts a thunderbolt – *vajraṃ yaṃ siṅcate* (Pathak 1981–84) or the *Tvaṣṭṛ* who fashions (*takṣ*) *Indra*'s bolt or sharpens the axe of *Brahmaṇaspati* (RV X. 53.9). Manual skill is indicated when a reference is made to *suhasa*: *amṛtasya panthāṃ gaṇaṃ devānām ṛbhavaḥ suhasatāḥ* (RV IV.35.3cd). The use of tools is indicated when the limbs of a body are supposed to be made by pointed implements: *māṃsamekaḥ piṃśati sūnayābhṛtam* (RV I.161.10c). In any case, *piś-* and the terms derived from it and some other roots, mentioned above, make evident the meanings which *śilpa* eventually shared with them.

Such a shared meaning is indicated in the term *citra* as well. It implies 'radiant splendour': *citramiti citramiva* (AitBr IV.11), a quality inherent in *śilpa*; and those endowed with the knowledge of *śilpa* are supposed to be conversant with *citra*, including *citrābhāsa*:

चित्राभासमितिख्यातं पूर्वैः शिल्पविशारदैः ।

ŚiL IV.5

... when painted (a variety of *citra*) is known as *citrābhāsa* to the art experts of the past. (Tr. A.K. Bhattacharya)

Citra implies a painting or an image made of stone, wood, metal and so on. According to exegetes it implies 'variegation' or 'effulgence'. *Uṣas* who was born of light is described as *citra-praketa* 'innately effulgent': *idaṃ śreṣṭhaṃ jyotiṣāṃ jyotirāgāccitraḥ praketo ajaniṣṭa vibhva* (RV I.113.1ab). *Citra* is the *anukaraṇa* (imitation) of the three worlds: *citre trailokyānukṛtiḥ smṛtaḥ* (VDhPur III.35.5) like, *śilpa* is the *anukaraṇa* of the divine arts (AitBr VI.27). That the two terms signifying one and the same activity became interchangeable is indicated in the label inscription on the Mahoba image of a Bodhisattva where *Śrī Sātana*, a sculptor, is designated as *citrakāra* (Misra 1975; 52).

The term *śilpa* generally implies action or skill in action. Eventually some other terms grew out of it, extended its purview, and sometimes validated it by pairing with it. Among the derived terms mention may be made of *śilpaka*, a type of *nṛtya* (dance).

शिल्पकश्चतुरङ्गः स्याच्चतुर्वृत्तिविराजितः ।

हास्यं विना रसैः पूर्णः स्वतो ब्राह्मणनायकः ॥

हीनोपनायकः क्वापि श्मशानादिसमाकुलः ।

BhPrak IX.8 (line no. 1-3)

Śilpaka has four acts, it is adorned with four *vṛttis*, is complete in itself with all the *rasas* except *hāsyā* (humour). It has an inferior secondary hero. Sometimes it is crowded with crematorium etc. (Tr. P.L. Sharma)

But *śilpin* is by far the most significant term derived from *śilpa* and paired with it. Every act implies a doer, and *śilpin* fulfills that role: therefore *śilpin* is one in whom *śilpa* resides. In the early texts we have *śilpavān* in the sense of the abode of *śilpa* (KauṣBr XXV.12) but *śilpin* is absent there. Later, *śilpin* and various other terms, e.g. *kāru*, *karmakāra*, *sūtradhāra*, *rūpakāra*, *rūpadakṣa*, *citrakara*, etc. (Misra 1975: 33ff.; 17ff.) signified him and swelled his ranks. In any case, if *śilpa* is a consummate act, *śilpin* is its talented doer, as in a verse quoted from the Silimpur stone inscription of Jayapaladeva (mark the pun *alikhāt* and *varṇabhakti*):

शिल्पविन्मागधः कामी तन्मनावर्णभक्तिभिः ।

सोमेश्वरोऽलिखद् इमां प्रशस्तिं स्वामिवप्रियाम् ॥

Ep Ind XII, p. 295

Just as a lover paints with rapt attention his own mistress by means of colour decoration, so did Someśvara, the Magadhan (*śilpi*) incise (with rapt attention) this *praśasti* by means of a division of letters. (Tr. R.G. Basak)

Development of the Concept: Vedic

In the Vedic texts and the later tradition of image-making, the term *śilpa* has a sublimity par excellence. Conceptually, Vedic *śilpa* is as varied as it is exalted. In essence, the creative process and its product together constitute *śilpa*. It is a potential as well as an exercise: a link that activates action by its consummate efficiency in the cause and effect series. *Śilpa* musters in itself the efficiency to bring about the states of both 'being' and 'becoming'. It is a principle by which cosmic elements are brought forth and rendered active, and in that it is a sanctifying element, as it were constituted of its indwelling energy which makes the Sun move and the Earth extended; the atmosphere finds support in it, and by it speech is strengthened: it is the very *prāṇa*, 'breath' in the 'breaths'. It is neither the *bindu* 'core', nor the *bīja*, 'seed', nor the primal stuff from which the phenomenal and non-phenomenal elements or objects derive. On the other

hand, to be conformable, it requires an agent, e.g. Prajāpati, Kaśyapa or a sacrificer, in whom it turns itself as a key to the generative process which makes creation and its sustenance possible. It is essentially a potential which creates. As a potential it is amorphous but as a product its manifestations assume varied forms including those cosmogenic in character. Alternatively its validity lies sometimes in its being an 'imitation' of divine arts; in its propensity to forge a union between two disparate phenomena; or in its capacity to bring about a transmutation. In that it invokes the skill and dexterity of both hand and mind, the skills are sometimes explicit and sometimes implicit in it. Beauty and effulgence are its essential characteristics and its practice cultures the self. These basic tenets in *śilpa* as a concept are inferred from the passages that follow.

In the earliest occurrences we find *śilpa* twice in the **Rgveda** with the implication 'beautiful' and 'effulgent'. It rests in the 'beautiful', 'effulgent' form of Uṣas, or in Day and Night, or in the very idea of it:

सुशिल्पे बृहती मही पवमानो वृषण्यति ।

RV IX.5.6ab

With passion Pavamāna longs for the great lofty pair, well-formed.
(Tr. R.T.H. Griffith)

or:

देवी दिवो दुहितरा सुशिल्पे उषासानक्ता सदतां नि योनौ ।

आ वां देवास उशती उशन्त उरौ सीदन्तु सुभगे उपस्थे ॥

RV X.70.6

Here in this shrine may Dawn and Night, the Daghters of Heaven, the skilful Goddesses, be seated. In your wide lap, auspicious, willing ladies, may the Gods seat them with a willing spirit.
(Tr. R.T.H. Griffith)

This 'effulgent', 'beautiful' form is the product of *śilpa* which also represents an ensemble of multifarious ideas implying action in terms of its 'performance', 'recitation' or creative *élan*: generally an extraordinary skill or propensity by which an object is brought forth, measure to measure, form to form:

यद्वै प्रतिरूपं तच्छिल्पम् ।

ŚBr III.2.5.5

An image doubtless is what is conformable. (Tr. J. Eggeling)

Though the product of *śilpa* is always manifested, the process lies implicit in it, and is only inferred from → *anukaraṇa* (imitation) involved in such a manifestation. By imitation *śilpa* as manual process signifies bringing forth the divine into this phenomenal world:

देवशिल्पान्येतेषां वै शिल्पानामनुकृतीह शिल्पमधिगम्यते, - हस्ती कंसो वासो
हिरण्यमश्वतरिरथः शिल्पम् ॥

AitBr VI.27

These are the works or art of the gods, in imitation of these works of art here is a work of art accomplished, an elephant, a goblet, a garment, a gold object, a mule chariot are works of art.
(Tr. A.B. Keith)

Śilpa is indeed the *deva-śilpa* (divine art) in the **Aitareya Brāhmaṇa**, endowed with the quality of *chandas* (rhythm). One is divine and the other, its counterpart, 'cultures the self' even as it creates. Whatever is thus a reconstruction of heavenly form, stands signified as the imitation of *deva-śilpa* and let there be no doubt about the reciprocity of the two, for it is said that the sheer knowledge of *śilpa* as *deva-śilpa* and that of the reconstituted *śilpa* as its → *anukṛti* transforms such a knower into one who is accomplished in *śilpa*. Thus, in the **Aitareya Brāhmaṇa**, *śilpa* is supposed to be born in one who has the knowledge of it:

शिल्पं हास्मिन्नधिगम्यते य एवं वेद । यदेव शिल्पानी३ आत्मसंस्कृतिर्वाव शिल्पानि
च्छन्दोमयं वा एतैर्यजमान आत्मानं संस्क्रुते ।

AitBr VI.27

... a work of art is accomplished in him who knows thus, as to those works of art the *Śilpas* are a perfection of self; verily by them the sacrificer perfects himself as composed of metres. (Tr. A.B. Keith)

Manifesting the unmanifested is central to the relationship of process and product which constitutes *śilpa*. It is, as it were, as source of an extraordinary skill, energy, or efficiency by which cosmic elements take their form, stay firm in their respective places, and derive their support. By the strength and ingenuity of *śilpa*, Kaśyapa creates stability in the *Sūryas*; in that action *indriyas* (sense organs) have a clear role, and skill or power of action is implied: *yatte śilpaṃ kaśyapa rocanāvat indriyāvat puṣkalaṃ citrabhānu yasmin sūryā arpitāssaptasākam* (TĀr I.7.1; KāthSam XXXVII.9). Bhaṭṭa Bhāskara Miśra explains the passage as referring to Kaśyapa who is a *sūkṣmadraṣṭā* (a fine perceiver). He is Kaśyapa in having a 'constant perception of the world': *viśvaṃ śākṣitvena sarvadā paśyati kaśyapaḥ*. Bhaṭṭa Bhāskara Miśra explains this passage as invoking Kaśyapa in whom *śilpa* is the propensity to create the universe (*jagat sṛṣṭi lakṣaṇam*); it is evident like light; it is firm in the power of it; it is strengthening, capable, and effulgent. By the power of his *śilpa* stay firm the seven *Sūryas*; and in that lies his *śilpa*. (Strangely, it recalls to mind the dispersion phenomenon in optics which demonstrates that white light is composed of seven colours.) The same process-product togetherness is alluded to the **Tāṇḍya Mahābrāhmaṇa** (XVI.4.3-7)

where Prajāpati created Indra as superior to all his *prajā* 'offspring': *Śilpa* is instrumental here in endowing supremacy to Indra.

Prajāpati appears as a divine creator steeped in the skill of *śilpa*, for, by it he created the entire cosmic order; he even conferred this on Indra to bring about his supremacy. Hence Indra became endowed with the same *śilpa* which qualifies Prajāpati:

सोऽकामयतेन्द्रो मे प्रजायां श्रेष्ठः स्यादिति तामस्मै स्रजं प्रत्यमुञ्चत्ततो वा इन्द्राय प्रजाः
श्रेष्ठयायातिष्ठन्त तच्छिल्पं पश्यन्त्यो यत्पितर्य्यपश्यन् ।

TāṇḍMBr XVI.4.3

That Prajāpati desired that my Indra should become supreme amongst the people, He bestowed that garland on Indra. Then people began to recognise Indra as supreme, seeing the same *śilpa* in him which they saw in Prajāpati. (Tr. R.V. Tripathi)

येभिर्शिल्पैः पप्रथानामदृंहत् । येभिर्द्यामभ्यर्पिंशत्
प्रजापतिः । येभिर्वाचं विश्वरूपां समव्ययत् ... येभिरादित्यस्तपति
प्रकेतुभिः । येभिस्सूर्यो ददृशे चित्रभानुः । येभिर्वाचं पुष्कलेभिर्व्ययत् ।

TBr II.7.15.2

With these *śilpas* Prajāpati strengthened the heaven. With these he made the heaven shapely. With these he expanded the speech thoroughly. O Agni! you make the king imbued with those splendours by which the Āditya shines with enhanced brilliance; by which the sun is seen with numerous rays; by which the speech is made complete and capable of denoting all meanings. (Tr. R.V. Tripathi)

The commentator emphasises the implication of *śilpa* here in the sense of →*yoga* (application), *bala* (capacity), and *sāmarthya* (efficiency) by which the entire world is invested with form, even as from it the cosmic elements derive their origin and strength. Prajāpati is its source and also the one who manipulates it and renders it active. *Śilpa* is conspicuous as →*tattva* (active element) in primal creation: *śilpaṃ siddhisandohalakṣaṇam* (SvT XI.197): Arts and the like are characterised by multitudes of power and the commentator Kṣemarāja says that like earth *śilpa* is a *tattva* in as much as, like earth, it has, among other things, the power or propensity to attract and control.

Śilpa composes →*prāṇa* (breath) in the →*puruṣa* which personifies sacrifice. It has the same efficacy in the *puruṣa* that breath has in a body; it enlivens it and activates it. As *prāṇa* it is also *ātman* (body) for the two are perpetually inseparable and rest in togetherness through *śilpa*. The **Kauṣītaki Brāhmaṇa** (XXV.12) contemplates an organic unity between *puruṣa* and its counterpart: the sacrifice. *Puruṣa* is perceived both as the abode and the indwelling spirit which together

relate to its *āyatana*, *prāṇa* and *ātmā*: and *śilpa* is the principle that binds them all:

प्राणास्तानि शिल्पानि पुरुषो वै यज्ञस्तस्य य ऊर्ध्वाः प्राणास्तत्प्रातःसवनमात्मा माध्यंदिनो
येऽवाञ्चस्तत् तृतीयसवनं तानि शिल्पानि तस्मात् तृतीयसवने शिल्पानि क्रियन्ते
एतद्ध्येषामायतनमथ ।

KauṣBr XXV.12

The Śilpas are the lower breaths; the sacrifice is man; the morning pressing is the upper breaths, the mid-day is the body; the third pressing the lower, these are Śilpas. Therefore the Śilpas are performed at the third pressing, for this is their abode.

(Tr. A.B. Keith)

The body-soul coalescence is further described in terms of a *śilpa* and *prṣṭha* combination in the sacrifice (*prṣṭha* is a particular arrangement of Sāman in a sacrifice). And the two together compose the *yajña-puruṣa*:

आत्मा वै पृथ्यानि प्राणाः शिल्पानि न वाऽन्तरेणात्मानं प्राणाः ख्यायन्ते न प्राणानन्तरेणात्मानो
एतन्नाना तस्मादग्निष्टोम एवापि विश्वजिति माध्यंदिने शिल्पानि शस्यन्ते नेत्राणेभ्य
आत्मानमपादधानीत्यथो प्रजापतिर्वै विश्वजित्सर्वं वै प्रजापतिर्विश्वजित्तस्माद् सर्वाणि
पृथ्यानि क्रियन्ते सर्वाणि शिल्पानि ... ।

KauṣBr XXV.12

The Prṣṭhas are the body; the Śilpas are the breaths; the breaths are not known without the body, nor without the breaths the body; assuredly, the two are not severable. Therefore the Śilpas are recited at the midday pressing in the Viśvajit as an Agniṣṭoma (for they think) 'Let me not separate the body from the breaths'. Moreover, the Viśvajit is Prajāpati; as Prajāpati the Viśvajit is all. Therefore all the Prṣṭhas are performed, all the Śilpas. (Tr. A.B. Keith)

The *śilpas* provide stability to the *prṣṭhas* even as they indeed constitute the *prāṇa* (breath) of sacrifice. Thus, if verses in a sacrifice are its food, the *śilpas* are its breath:

न्यूञ्जोऽन्नं प्राणाः प्राणाः शिल्पानि प्राणेष्वेव तत्प्राणं दधाति ।

KauṣBr XXV.13

The repetition of '0' (in a sacrifice) is food; the breaths are food; the Śilpas are the breaths; verily thus he (the Hotṛ) places the breath in the breaths. (Tr. A.B. Keith)

The centrality of *śilpa* is defined in reference to 'atmosphere' which, too, like *śilpa*, stays in the 'middle', but unlike *śilpa* is bereft of a base or support. The

efficacy of *śilpa* lies in its being a support and base to 'atmosphere' (so that it does not fall); in its being a support to other verses so that they would not lose their efficacy when recited; in its being a support to the triplets, viz. song, dance, and music in which it rests, even as it establishes them day by day. All these, i.e. the sacrifice, the atmosphere, the verses, the triplets are all composed of *śilpa*:

अथो अपृष्ठं वा एतद् यदन्यत्र बृहत्यै क्रियते च्यवन्त उ वा अत्र बृहत्यै पृष्ठानि शिल्पेष्वेव तदहरहः प्रतितिष्ठन्तो यन्ति ।

KauṣBr XXIX.5

Moreover, that which is performed without the Bṛhatī is not a Prṣṭha; the Prṣṭhas here fall away from the Bṛhatī; verily thus day by day they continue finding support in the Śilpas. (Tr. A.B. Keith)

अथो अंतरिक्षं वा एष मध्यमस्यहो नारम्भणं वा इदमन्तरिक्षमप्रतिष्ठानं शिल्पेष्वेव तदहरहः प्रतितिष्ठन्तो यन्ति ।

KauṣBr XXIX.5

Moreover, the middle (set of) three days is the atmosphere; the atmosphere is without base or support; verily thus, day by day they continue finding support in the Śilpas. (Tr. A.B. Keith)

तानि वै तृचानि भवन्ति । त्रिवृद् वै शिल्पं नृत्यं गीतं वादितमिति तेष्वेव तदहरहः प्रतितिष्ठन्तो यन्ति ।

KauṣBr XXIX.5

They are triplets; the Śilpa is threefold, dancing, music and singing. Verily thus day by day they continue finding support in them. (Tr. A.B. Keith)

Śilpa is understood in these passages in its centrality, and its supportive efficiency in that position. It supports many thing, but it rests in the middle set of a ten-day *soma* sacrifice:

अथैतानि शिल्पानि मध्यमे त्र्यहे शस्यन्ते शिल्पवान् ह्येष मध्यमस्यहो भवति ।

KauṣBr XXIX.5

Then the Śilpas are recited in the middle three days, for the middle (set of) three days contains the Śilpas. (Tr. A.B. Keith)

Obviously, in the passage *śilpa* is a latent force, or particularly in the case of the triplets it brings about, as it were, a corporeality which may be understood by sound in singing, gestures in dance, ritual recitations in the sacrifice. To these propensities of *śilpa* may be added also its capacity in replicating the divine forms to which mention is made in the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* (VI.27).

Śilpas in some of the passages above imply a coalescence of dexterous poetic composition fit to be 'recited', or similarly dexterous ritual acts fit to be 'performed'. This dexterity was as much mental as it was manual, whereby it rested rather in the notion of it than manifestly in a well-defined corporeality. Action or *karma* is an essential part of it, whether it lies undefined in the substratum, as in the black and white colours, or in the 'dappled', 'variegated' forms, or in their coupling. It is also seen in the creative process through which a divine personage brings forth the cosmic elements (op. cit). *Ad seriatim*, their details follow.

When *ṛk* is sung in the musical metres of *sāman*, i.e. when *ṛk* is joined thus with *sāman*, this 'coupling is described as *śilpa*. In this manner *śilpa* becomes a particular way of sacrifice which has the efficacy to protect, preserve, and save the sacrificer from violence:

ऋक्सामयोः शिल्पे स्थस्ते वामा रभे ते मा पातमास्य यज्ञस्योदृचः । ... शर्मासि शर्म मे
यच्छ नमस्ते अस्तु मा मा हिंसीः ।

TSam I.2.2.1; VI.1.1.3

Ṛk-Sāman combined; this you are *śilpa*. I begin those (*śilpas*). May they protect the oblations. May you be a benefactor, and grant me benefaction. Obeisance be to you; save me from violence.

The coupling *ṛk-sāman* implying *śilpa* is further explained by the ritual of a suggestive replication of this coupling in two animal skins – one black and the other white. The ritual required the sacrificer to touch the spot where the white joined the black and at the same time, announcing: 'You are the "images" of the *ṛk* and *sāman*, as you are the counterpart of the original'. Affinity is explained here by analogy and this coupling is designated as *śilpa* in the manner of the recognized formulae '*yadvai pratirūpaṃ tat śilpaṃ*' – Whatever is a counterpart is "*śilpa*".

अथ जघनेन कृष्णाजिने पश्चात् प्राङ् जान्वाक्र उपविशति । स यत्र शुक्लानां च कृष्णानां
च संधिर्भवति-तदेवमभिमृश्य जपत्यृक्सामयोः शिल्पे स्थः इति । यद्वै प्रतिरूपं
तच्छिल्पमृचां च साम्नां च प्रतिरूपे स्थः इत्येवैतदाह ।

ŚBr III.2.1.5

He then squats down behind the two skins with his face towards the east and with bent (right) knee; and while touching them thus at a place where the white and black (hair) joins he mutters "ye are the images of the *Ṛk* and *Sāman*: an image doubtless is what is conformable." 'Ye are conformable to the *Ṛks* and *Sāmans*', he thereby means to say. (Tr. J. Eggeling)

Mark the transformation of the one phenomenon into the other. Coupling is common to both i.e. to the *ṛk-sāman* duo and to the black and white skins (or the colours in the skin). The union of *ṛk* with the *sāman* and their symbolization in the black and white colours of the skins must not be missed here. Artificing is implicit in the union and in the replication of the one into the other. This is *śilpa* where singing or recitation apparently assumes colours. A similar transmutation is suggested again when sacrifice designated as *trayī vidyā* (threefold science) is supposed to assume colours, which again is *śilpa* and is represented, in this case only by the black skin of an antelope.

सैषा त्रयी विद्या यज्ञः । तस्या एतच्छिल्पमेष वर्णस्तद्यत्कृष्णाजिनं भवति ।

ŚBr I.1.4.3

Now this same threefold science is sacrifice; that meaning manifold form, that (varying) colour of this science is (represented by) this black antelope skin. (Tr. J. Eggeling)

Śilpa explicitly implies colour in some other passages. When different gods and the animals dear to them are mentioned, those of 'dappled' or 'variegated' type are mentioned as *śilpa* whereby the term qualifies colours:

शिल्पो वैश्वदेव ।

TSām V.5.22.1

The dappled (victims) belong to All-Gods. (Tr. A.B. Keith)

Śilpa is a potential force which must run unhindered. They were to be allowed an unarrested, un-inhibited course, and priests were free to practise them:

नेदच्छावाकस्य शिल्पमन्तर्यामि

KauṣBr XXV.13

Let me not obstruct the *Śilpa* of Acchāvāka (a priest).
(Tr. A.B. Keith)

Similarly, a wish is expressed that the maidens who practised *śilpas* may accomplish learning:

शिल्पा वैश्वदेव्यो रोहिण्यस्त्र्यवयो वाचे ।

YV XXIV.5

Growing like tender creepers, may the maidens accomplished in the *śilpas* of All-gods, go for learning the speech, under the protection of their parents and teacher.

तौ वा एताविन्द्रस्तोमौ वीर्यवन्तौ शिल्पं वा एतौ नाम स्तोमावास्ताम् ॥
पश्यते गृहे शिल्पं य एवं वेद ॥

TāndMBr XVI.4.8-9

These two *stomas* of Indra (named as Abhijit and Viśvajit) were powerful. These two *stomas* were also called *śilpas*. A person who knows (that Viśvajit *stoma* is in fact a *śilpa*) sees *śilpa* in his house. (Tr. R.V. Tripathi)

Conceptually thus, *śilpa* signifies an extraordinary potential, a sanctifying principle, a supportive, sustaining, and strengthening force, a skill endowed with a sense of wonder for its creative essence, and sometimes a propensity 'divine' in character which remains sanctified even in its emulation. It is also a quality which 'cultures' the self: it is a rhythm that tunes the performer into its harmony. By *śilpa* the divine personages create and strengthen the cosmic forces, and by it a transmutation is brought about in the different, disparate phenomena. Its centrality in the different phenomena or elements, e.g. sacrifice, *puruṣa*, *prāṇa*, *ātman*, and so on, is basic to its conceptual substance. As an ingenuous generative principle it exists amorphous merely in the idea or the notion of it, simply by itself, but when resorted to, it turns into a boundless energy which fills the universe with *antarikṣa* (atmosphere), extends the earth, strengthens the sun and differentiates *viśva-rūpa* (all forms). It is the principle by which the unmanifested is rendered manifest, and the manifest derives its corporeality and colours. It manifests the basic forms of arts, e.g. song, dance, music, colour and plastic arts, but is also identified by the quality of 'beauty' and 'effulgence' that may qualify its manifestation. All in all, *śilpa* is a product and also the process that sanctifies and enlivens it, and rests there as its very *prāṇa* (breath).

Buddhism

The exalted status of *śilpas* continued in the Buddhist world view but in the process of growing occupational differentiations in the post-Vedic society *śilpas* lost their exalted status, and both *śilpas* as well as their practitioners were devalued when the former became identified with *vṛttis*. First about the exalted status of *śilpas* and then about their devaluation and the reasons for it.

Sippa in Buddhist texts constitutes all the learning that exists in this world; the only exception to this rule being the *sikkha* (learning) in the Vedas. All the rest is indeed *śilpa*:

वेदा सिक्खानि नाम, अवसेसानि सिप्पानि सिप्पं नामाति ।

MilPañ I.8

The Vedas are called the trainings ... the remaining crafts are called crafts. (Tr. I.B. Horner)

Sippa indeed liberates, though in it may lie mingled both pain and pleasure, anguish and bliss. The bliss of *sippa* is equal to the bliss of *nibbāna*; so much is said in the **Milinda Pañha** (Trenckner 315). In the text a question is asked whether there is *sukha* (bliss) in the *sippas* that are practised by the *ācārya*? When the answer is given in the affirmative, it is followed by another: 'Is not this bliss in craft mixed with anguish? (*sippa sukhaṃ dukkhena missam*), to which the answer is in the negative. So, again, there is yet another question asked: 'Why do these *ācāryas* mortify their bodies by going through all kinds of suffering in learning a *sippa*?' The list is formidable for it involves a complete surrender to someone else: *sakacitta nikkhipitvā paricittānuvattanena*, besides having to 'rise in respectful salutation to the *ācārya*, fetch water, provide tooth-stick and water for rinsing the mouth, accept the left-over food, attend massaging and bathing of *ācārya*, take a hard bed for sleeping and so on. so a question is asked: *eta sippasukhaṃ nāma*. 'Is this how craft is bliss?' To this it is said that all this is *pubba bhāga* (preliminary stage) of *sippa priyesaṇā* (quest of a craft). We are further told that bliss in craft follows only after this anguish: *dukkhena ... ācariyā sippaṃ parisayetvā sippasukhaṃ anubhavanti*. Thus it is said that 'bliss in a craft is un-mixed with anguish': *sippasukhaṃ dukkhena amissam*; and that 'this bliss in a craft is one thing, anguish another': *annaṃ taṃ sippa sukhaṃ annaṃ dukkhaṃ ti*. And then the **Milinda Pañha** delivers the final statement impregnated with the deepest meaning in which, by suggestion, *nibbāna* is brought into comparison with *sippa* in as much as in *nibbāna* so also in *sippa* bliss is not mixed with anguish: *annaṃ dukkhaṃ annaṃ nibbāna ti*.

The Buddhist texts reflect an ambivalence in regard to the status of crafts, but in them there is little suggestion of *sippas* being regarded as polluting or as impure unlike in the Dharmasūtras and Smṛtis and other texts, where they are generally stigmatized; and thereby hangs a tale. It will be conceded that the unexalted inflexions in the meaning of the term *śilpa* were actuated by the prejudices of the priestly, orthodox temper which in the post-Vedic age continually tried to devalue manual work and also the skills involved in it. The **Maitrī Upaṇiṣad** (VII.8) firmly holds on to this view, and seems to mark a stage when differentiation in regard to the status of *śilpa* started. Thus, it disparagingly lists *nitya śilpopaṇḍitā* (those continually living on *śilpa*), as the part of group which was regarded as 'hindrance to knowledge', and therefore 'unworthy of heaven. Others in the category consisted of those 'who were continually hilarious, continually roving about, town-beggars, disciples of (*śūdras* and also) those who in spite of being *śūdras* are learned, rogues, dancers, mercenaries, renegades in royal service, and also those who hinder the believers in the Vedas by offering tricks of futile reasoning and observation' (Chattopadhyaya 1977: 286ff.; 220). The text further says that by the soul-denying doctrine based on tricks of false observation and reason people are bluffed (by such categories of persons) and

thus are disabled to discern between what is genuinely Vedic and what is not so' (Chattopadhyaya 1977; 286ff.).

The passage in the **Maitrī Upaniṣad** affords a clear view of the ideological rift between the orthodoxy and those who pursued *śilpas*. The latter did not believe in the Vedas and perhaps derived sanction from some philosophical system which was more in tune with their pursuits and thus legitimized their status even though the ideological premises of such a system stood in opposition to the views of orthodoxy. It is of interest to note that Lokāyata is mentioned as *śilpa* in the **Udāna** (31–32). Lokāyata is basically a philosophical system in Indian tradition which rejects Vedas, and is therefore regarded as bad logic and folkish: *lokāyatam kutarkaṃca prākṛtam...* (GarPur I.98.17; Awasthi 1988: 294). In any case, the **Maitrī Upaniṣad** represents the diatribe and contempt of orthodoxy towards certain types of people, including *śilpīns* whose pursuits were not in tune with the theoretical temper of the orthodox. It also explains, to some extent, why in ancient India engineers and technologists did not find a climate conducive to their profession (Chattopadhyaya: op. cit). In such a climate *śilpa*'s validity as a pursuit became questionable in as much as its ideological premises were based in the materialistic tradition. When *śilpas* were devalued their practitioners suffered the same fate. The Dharmasūtras seem to have queered the pitch for devaluation of crafts, and later the Dharmaśāstras accorded an impure status to artisans (Misra, *Kalakshetra* V, 4:6). In conclusion, it may be said that occupational divisions in the later Vedic society (1000 B.C. to 500) had already produced social differentiations; the ideological rift as reflected in the **Maitrī Upaniṣad** gave a sound theoretical basis to such differentiations, and by 500 B.C. we see *śilpas* stigmatized and their practitioners relegated to the rank of *śūdra* in the *varṇa* hierarchy.

Nevertheless *śilpas* assumed greater credibility with the ascendance of Buddhism, and the rise of trade in the wake of 'second urbanization' specially because of their utility in a settled agrarian economy under the impact of trade and urbanization. *Śilpas* in the Vedic period consisted of a ritual act, and arts. But now they grew in number, and this requires examining as to what constitutes *śilpas* during this period of study.

The Jātakaś refer to eighteen *śilpas* without enumerating them, and this appears to be a stock number. The **Majjhima Nikāya** (Trenckner: I.85) refers to seven of them, namely, counting, calculation, computation, trade, cowherding, agriculture, king's service, and *śippamannatarena* (other crafts), e.g.:

कुलपुत्तो येन सिप्पठानेन जीविकं कप्पेति, यदि मुद्दाय यदि गणनाय यदि संखानेन यदि कसिया यदि वाणिज्जाय यदि गोरक्खेन यदि इस्सत्थेन यदि राजपोरिसेन यदि सिप्पज्जतरेन ।

... a young man of the family earns his living by some craft, such as reckoning on fingers, such as calculation, such as computing, such as agriculture, such as being in a rājā's service, and such as by another craft. (Tr. I.B. Horner)

The **Dīgha Nikāya** mentions twenty-five *sippas* which are indicated by their practitioners:

पुथुसिप्पायतनानि, सेय्यथिदं-हत्थारोहा अस्सारोहा रथिका धनुग्गहा चेलका चलका
पिण्डदायका उग्गा राजपुत्ता पक्खन्दिनो महानागा सूरा चम्मयोधिनी दासिकपुत्ता
आळारिका कप्पका ह्हापका सूदा मालाकारा रजका पेसकारा, नळकारा कुम्भकारा
गणका मुद्दिका, यानि वा पनञ्जानि पि एवङ्गतानि पुथुसिप्पायतनानि, ।

DīghNik I.51 (PTS)

There are ... a number of ordinary crafts – mahouts, horsemen, charioteers, archers, standard bearers, camp-marshalls, camp followers, high military officers of royal birth, military scouts, men brave as elephants, champions, heroes, warriors in buck-skin, home-born slaves, cooks, barbers, bath attendants, confectioners, garland makers, washermen, weavers, basket-makers, potters, arithmeticians, accountants, and whatsoever others of like kinds there may be.
(Tr. F. Max Müller)

The **Dīgha Nikāya** (I.51) says that the people practising their crafts enjoyed the fruits of their crafts: *sippaphalam upajīvanti*, and thus maintained themselves, their parents, children, and friends. They also afforded *dakṣiṇā* to brāhmaṇa – śramaṇas for attaining bliss (*sukha vipāka*). The *sukha vipāka* is explained in the commentary as *isto vipāka* (consummation of the desired) (Linatthavaṇṇana, I.282). The **Udāna** (31–32) repeats many of the crafts of the **Dīgha Nikāya** list but adds to it the *tharu sippa*, *kāveyya sippa* and *lokāyata sippa*. Incidentally, it regards agriculture as the foremost among all the *śilpas*: *sippam aggam*.

Whether in the Buddhist texts or elsewhere *śilpas* and their practitioners denominated each other, sometimes explicitly, as in the **Dīgha Nikāya** (I.51), and sometimes by implication, as in the *sippas* and ends by enumerating the practitioners. This reciprocal identity of crafts and those who practised them also indicates their complementarity, whereby a reference to one *ipso facto* encompasses the other. The situation is clear from the **Śukranītisāra** which confirms this inter-changeability: only the term *śilpa* is replaced here by another cognate term *kalā*:

पृथक् पृथक् क्रियाभिर्हि कलाभेदस्तु जायते ।

यां यां कलां समाश्रित्य तन्नाम्ना जातिरुच्यते ॥

ŚNSā IV.3.66

Differentiations in arts are born of differences in the action involved in them. Thus castes are known by the names depending on their support in the different arts.

Thus *śilpa* constitutes *ṛttis*, and in this equation lies encapsulated the entire history of the servile class in India particularly its gradual devaluation. Acceptance of *śilpa* as *ṛttis* was a major development in the later Vedic age, and these came to be associated exclusively with *sūdras* in ancient Indian.

The **Mahāvastu** deserves a special mention in regard to the *śilpas*, as it deviates from other lists and in particular mentions those who were performing the tasks exclusive to *śilpa* in the sense of 'arts'. These, in the list, consisted of *citrakāraka* (painter), *vardhakī* (carpenter), *rūpakāra* (sculptor), *kārupatrika* (carver), *pustakāraka* (modeller of clay), *pustakarma kāraka* (plasterer), *lepaka* (decorator), *sthapati* (architect) and *sūtrakāra* (surveyor) (Mahāvastu, Jones, III.112; 443). The **Rāmāyaṇa** similarly includes many such categories in the *śilpi varga* (class of artisans):

अथ भूमिप्रदेशज्ञाः सूत्रकर्मविशारदाः ।
स्वकर्मभिरताः शूराः खनकाः यन्त्रकास्तथा ॥
कर्मान्तिकाः स्थपतयः पुरुषाः यन्त्रकोविदाः ।
तथा वर्धकयश्चैव मार्गिणो वृक्षतक्षकाः ॥
सूपकाराः सुधाकारा वंश चर्मकृतस्तथा ।

Rām II.80.1-3ab

Those endowed with knowledge of earth, experts in surveying excavators, knowers of mechanical devices, workers, architects, servants in royal service, carpenters, woodcutters, diggers of well, plasterers, cane-workers, leather-workers, ... (moved for work).

Similarly significant is the reference to a *nagara-vaddhakī* as an architect in the **Milinda Pañha**:

यथा ... नगर वड्ढकी नगरं मापेतुकामो पठमं नगरद्वानं सोधापेत्वा खाणुकंटकं
अपकड्ढापेत्वा भूमि समं करापेत्वा ततो अपरभागे वीथि चतुक्क सिंघाटकादि परिच्छेदेन
विभाजित्वा नगरं मापेति ... ।

MilPañ II.1.9

Like ... a city architect, when he wants to build a city first has a site for the city cleared, and have it levelled when the stumps of the trees and the thorns have been removed, and builds the city after that and after he has planned the distribution of carriage roads, the squares and the places where three or four roads meet ... (Tr. I.B. Horner)

Eventually, the list of *śilpīns* engaged exclusively in art and architecture seems to have narrowed down to only four categories, e.g.:

भवन्ति शिल्पिनो लोके चतुर्धा स्वस्वकर्मभिः ॥

स्थपतिः सूत्रग्राही च वर्धकिस्तक्षकस्तथा ।

Mayam V.13cd-14ab

Here below, there are four sorts of builders each with their function: the architect, the *sūtragrahīn*, the *vardhaki* and the *takṣaka*.

(Tr. B. Dagens)

A differentiation thus seems to be indicated both in the *śilpas* and *śilpīns*, and it is obvious that divisions in the rank of *śilpīns* proliferated substantially. The process of this division seems to start in the post-Vedic period, and the **Maitrī Upaniṣad** seems to provide an explicit ideological basis to such differentiation.

Manifestation in the Arts

In the Śāstras relating to Arts, in a special sense, *śilpa* relates to image-making and in that it is designated also as *citra*. In the **Viṣṇudharmottara Purāṇa**, *citra* consists in images made of gold, silver, copper, stone, wood, iron, and so on:

सुवर्णरूप्यताम्रादि तच्च लोहेषु दर्शयेत् ॥

शिलादारुषु लोहेषु प्रतिमाकरणं भवेत् ।

अनेनैव विधानेन यथा चित्रमुदाहृतम् ॥

VDhPur III.43.31cd-32

The *khātapūrva* (that in which the digging is done first) is like painting and (it is done by) gold, silver, copper etc. (It is to) be exhibited amongst the people. Sculpture is made in stone, wood, and metals. The rules prescribed in case of painting apply here also. (Tr. R.V. Tripathi)

Śilpa specifically involves *karma* (manual action) and depending on the materials used in image-making it is an *ālekhyā* (variegation of colours), *lekha* (scribing), *dārukarma* (woodwork), *citikarma* (mental work), *pāṣāṇakarma* (painting) (*Kuṭṭanīmatam Commentary*, T.P. Bhattacharya 1947: 371). It is a *śāstra* or a *vidyā*:

शिल्पविद्या सदा श्रेष्ठा सर्वदानन्ददायिका ॥

ŚiPrak II.730cd

The knowledge of art (*śilpa-vidyā*) is always excellent and bestows gives all bliss. (Tr. A. Boner)

In this →*vidyā* or *śāstra*, →*lakṣaṇa* has a primary significance. It has a sanctity *par excellence* for the creator Brahmā created it and passed the skill to an artist. The reference here is to Nagnajit who, endowed as he was with *tapas*, 'austerities', *vrata* and Vedas, brought life back into a dead child by merely painting it:

As I (i.e. Brahma) granted you (this boon) you have painted the son of the Brahman and brought forth into the world of living the first picture. Because of the benefit that will accrue to the world from this, you established your claim to reverence. Today and forever shall this picture gain a place of eminence ... Because you have painted it at my command, the word *citra* ... will come into being on account of this first of the painted work.

(CiL of Nagnajit, p. 70, translated by Laufer)

This enlivened form, the first painting, became thus the source of all *citra*, and its substance lies in its capacity to enliven a form. According to the **Citra-Lakṣaṇa** (Goswamy and Dallapiccola: 76–79) all 'bodied ones' (gods, kings, great men, *sādhus*, women) are provided each with a body, and the art of measurement (*pramāṇa*), besides *lakṣaṇa* and *vyāñjana*, is supposed to capture these forms in an image. This quality of reconstituting a being by *lakṣaṇa* is not different from →*anukaraṇa* or *sādṛśya* of which the former is mentioned as early as the **Aitareya Brāhmaṇa**, and the latter in the **Citra-Lakṣaṇa** of Śrīkumāra, though its antiquity is Vedic (Misra: 1986). The quality of a *citra* does not lie in the approximation of the form but in the 'likeness' of it as of a 'shadow in a mirror':

सादृश्यं दृश्यते यत्तु दर्पणे प्रतिबिम्बवत् ।
तच्चित्रमिति विख्यातं नालमाकारमात्रकम् ॥

CiL 147

That painting is well known as *citra* which is not merely a sketch in outline, but shows the resemblance (of a figure) as truly as the reflection in a mirror. (Tr. A.K. Bhattacharya)

The implications of the terms *lakṣaṇa* and →*anukaraṇa* are best explained in the texts on poetics, and →*pramāṇa* is a term which relates to epistemology. The significance of *lakṣaṇa* lies in its original meaning as occurring in the Brāhmaṇas where it means, among other things, the "sign that becomes the denominator of the essence of an object, for it distinguishes an invocatory formula qualifying particular deities which either figure in that formula or were physically visible. This meaning of the term and its association indicate its use originally to qualify deities with symbols, which is significant for art and iconography. In any case, *lakṣaṇa* connects the *parokṣa*, (distant) with the *pratyakṣa* (immediate), which

represent two levels of reality, and in that sense *lakṣaṇa* eventually becomes a part of *lakṣaṇa vidyā* concerned with the prognostication on the basis of distinctive marks .. on the body of men or of women or of deities, as in iconography" (Pathak 1986).

The word *pramāṇa* has similar implications and its significance in connection with *pratimā lakṣaṇa* in the Śilpaśāstras cannot but be emphasized. *Pramāṇa* is both the standard of measure and the proof of identity with the object which it seeks to capture. Like *lakṣaṇa* it is basic to *śilpa*, e.g.:

The sacred knowledge of characteristic attributes (Tibetan *mts'an* = *lakṣaṇa*) in as much as I (Nagnajit) have learnt from Brahma, and the qualities of their proportions should be understood perfectly. In the Three-Worlds that are deserving of respect, are all bodied-ones provided each with a body: hear from me, therefore, an explanation of the proportion (*pramāṇa*) of their limbs.

(CiL of Nagnajit, p. 79, translated by Laufer)

In the 'form', the *pramāṇas* relate to different types that need being represented according to the dictates of a Śilpaśāstra:

षट्शिल्पाङ्गप्रयोगेण प्रजनयन्ति रूपाणि ॥

VSUp I.2

Art-forms are produced by means of six disciplines.

(Tr. A. Boner and B. Bäumer)

The same text describes *śilpa* as the means of producing images: *śilpāt pratimā jāyante* (VSUp I.5). In the *śilpas*, *pramāṇa* gives a proof by a recourse to *pratyakṣa* and *anumāna*. These two *pramāṇas* are variously defined, but its definition by Bhāmaha, who regards it as endowed with *kalpanā* or, in other words, with a superimposition of the five *upādhis*: *jāti*, *guṇa*, *kriyā*, *dravya* and *nāma*, seems relevant to a work of art, e.g.:

कल्पनां नामजात्यादियोजनां प्रतिजानते ॥

Kāvyāl V.6cd

By *kalpanā* is meant super-imposition of *jāti* etc. (Tr. T. Nandi)

The essence of an object of art is thus authenticated by superimposition on it of the *upādhis* which may lead to its cognition in which *anumāna* (inference) has a direct role. *Anumāna* is defined as *nāntarīyārthadarśana*, 'seeing the invariable concomitance by a person who knows the same' (Nandi 1983: 91). *Anumāna* is the very soul of art which gives to an artist a virtuosity which may otherwise be missing. *Anukaraṇa* too is the basis of *śilpa* and allied arts. These concepts of creative investiture permeated *śilpa* and also the other arts, and

underscore their complementarity. The correspondence of *śilpa* with other arts and with learning needs to be defined more appropriately. *Śilpa* is necessarily a part of a kindred group of art and learning consisting of *vidyā*, *kalā*, *nrtya*, *kāvya*, *nāṭya*, *viññāna*, and so on. It constitutes all learning outside the three Vedas (op. cit). In the **Manorathapūraṇī** (I. 332) *sippas* comprise the *sāra* 'essence' which few can comprehend. The Buddha learns them easily (DīghNik III.156), and satisfies Daṇḍapāṇi of his skills when the former expresses doubts of the latter's accomplishments:

कुमारश्च न शिल्पज्ञः ... तत् कथं अशिल्पज्ञोऽहं दुहितरं दास्यामि ।

LVi Śilpasandarśana Parivarta (XII) 163 (PTS)

The prince is not accomplished in skills, so how can I give my daughter (in marriage) to such an unaccomplished person?

No wonder, in the **Manorathapūraṇī**, (IV.180f.) a skilled *śilpin* is described as possessed of an inexhaustible jar: the more you empty it the more it does not empty. In the **Milinda Pañha** (315) *sippa* is *sikkham* (learning); it is *jñāna* in the **Manorathapūraṇī** (I.373). In the **Śukranītisāra** (IV.3.23) it is one of the thirty two *vidyās* (*vidyā mukhyaśca dvātriṃśat*) and consists of many skills:

प्रासादप्रतिमाराम-गृहवाप्यादि संस्कृतिः ।

कथिता यत्र तच्छिल्पशास्त्रमुक्तं महर्षिभिः ॥

ŚNSā IV.3.58

That is regarded as *Śilpaśāstra* by the great sages in which are described the ways of making the temples (and palaces), images, gardens, house, wells, etc.

Whatever generally connotes *śilpa* also figures in the **Śukranīti**'s (IV.3.84–90) list of the sixty-four *kalās*:

मृत्तिकाकाष्ठपाषाणधातुभाण्डादिसत्क्रिया ।

पृथक्कला चतुष्कन्तु चित्राद्यालेखनं कला ॥

ŚNSā IV.3.84

Making pots (and utensils) of clay, wood, stone, and metal are the four different arts; painting, too, is an art.

According to Bhartṛhari→ *vidyā*, →*kalā* and *śilpa* are all complementary:

सा सर्वविद्याशिल्पानां कलानां चोपबन्धनी ।

तद्वशादभिनिष्पन्नं सर्वं वस्तु विभज्यते ॥

Vāk I.117

It is this which is the basis of all sciences, crafts and arts. Whatever is the basis created due to this can be analysed (and communicated).
(Tr. K.A.S. Iyer)

The tradition of designating →*gīta* (poetic composition, hymns included), *nṛtya* (dance) and *vādita* (music) as *śilpa* goes back to the **Kauṣītaki Brāhmaṇa** (XXIX.5). That these skills belong to the same genre is indicated in the bracketing them together under the sixty-four *kalās* (arts) in the **Śukranītisāra** (IV.3.23ff.). In the **Viṣṇudharmottara Purāṇa** (III.2.2–8) the principles of *citra*, *pratimā*, *nṛtya* and *gīta* are all regarded as mutually interdependent. The **Nāṭya-Śāstra** (I.116) regards all knowledge, e.g. *jñāna*, *śilpa*, *vidyā*, *kalā*, *yoga*, and *karma*, as incomplete unless validated by *nāṭya* (drama):

न तज्ज्ञानं न तच्छिल्पं न सा विद्या न सा कला ।

नासौ योगो न तत्कर्म नाट्येऽस्मिन् यत्र दृश्यते ॥

NS I.116

There is no knowledge; no craft, no branch of learning, no art, no combination and no action which is not to be seen in this *nāṭya* (theatre). (Tr. R.V. Tripathi)

Almost a similar sentiment is expressed by Bhāmaha who wonders at the great burden that a *kavi* (poet) carries in that he has to validate by →*kāvya* (poetry) the knowledge that may exist in *śabda* (word), *vāc* (speech), *nyāya* (logic) and *kalā* (arts):

न स शब्दो न तद्वाच्यं न स न्यायो न सा कला ।

जायते यत्र काव्याङ्गमहो भारो महान्कवेः ॥

Kāvyaḥ V.4

There is no word, no meaning, no logic, and no art which does not become part of poetry. Oh, the great burden of a poet! (Tr. R.V. Tripathi)

The pervasive quality of different arts is emphasized in Bṛhaspati and Devaṇabhaṭṭa (Altekar 1957: 201) who define *śilpa* as *viññāna* (science) incorporating the knowledge of metal casting, dance and so on, for which training and learning in the house of a teacher under his direction is necessary:

विज्ञानमुच्यते शिल्पं हेमकूप्यादिसंस्थितिः ।

नृत्यादिकं च तच्छिक्षन्कुर्यात्कर्म गुरोर्गृहे ॥

VivR p. 141

The special knowledge with regard to making of golden pitchers and (performing) dances etc., is *śilpa*. (The Person desirous of) training in *śilpa* should work at the house of a teacher. (Tr. R.V. Tripathi)

Devaṇabhaṭṭa in his commentary on the passage adds that *śilpa* lies in making anklets, wristlets and so on; in dance, music and so on; in making pillars,

pots, and the like; and that all these are called *śilpa*: *kañkaṇa kaṭakādi nirmāṇa viṣayaṃ nṛtyagītādi viṣayaṃ cakārātstambha kumbhādiracanā viṣayaṃ ca vijñānaṃ śilpamucyate* (Altekar: op. cit): 'The special knowledge pertaining to the making of bangles and bracelets and so on, and the construction of pillars and pots etc. also taken together, is said to be *śilpa*.' (Tr. R.V. Tripathi)

Śilpa designates *kāvya* too in as much as *kāvya* is regarded as a *śilpa* (Udāna, 31-32). Interestingly, the Vedic *kāru*, which signified a poet, eventually turned into a *śilpin* in the sense of an image-maker:

उणि कारुश्च शिल्पी स्यात् ॥

AgPur 357.1c

The word *kāru* is derived from the root *kṛ-* (to do) with the suffix *u* (*uṇ*) in the sense of a *śilpin*.

The **Agni Purāṇa** (XLIV.2) uses the term *śilpin* in the sense of 'one who makes idols'.

Conceding that all arts are generically interdependent, the question remains as to what binds them all together? As early as the **Aitareya Brāhmaṇa** (VI.27) *śilpa* is defined as *anukṛti* (imitation) of the 'divine' and the idea keeps recurring in the texts on poetics and drama. The sanctity of the arts in the Indian tradition seems to lie, among other things, in its faculty to imitate, to reproduce what may not indeed be real but which at least stimulates the real. Imitation sanctifies and validates the manifestation so produced, whether in drama, or in *śilpa*, or any-where. Imitation of the seven *lokas* (continents) occurs in drama; as also in *kāvya* (poetry):

सप्तद्वीपानुकरणं नाट्ये ह्यस्मिन् प्रतिष्ठितम् ॥

NS I.117cd

The imitation of (all the) seven continents is very well practised in this *nāṭya* (drama). (Tr. R.V. Tripathi)

Imitation is explained by Abhinavagupta in terms of *anukīrtana* (re-telling), and therefore as an *anuvyavasāya* (re-perception) (Gnoli 1968: 41 fn2). Imitation leads to aesthetic pleasure, and it is differently defined by aestheticians like Śaṅkuka and Abhinavagupta. According to Śaṅkuka, *anukaraṇa* (imitation) or *sthāyī bhāva* (permanent state of mind) is *rasa* (which is generated in poetry and provides the aesthetic pleasure in it); and just because it is a reproduction, it is called by a different word, that is *rasa*. *Anukaraṇa rūpavatvād eva ca nāmāntareṇa vyapadiṣṭo rasaḥ* (Gnoli: 4. 29). Abhinavagupta explains *anukaraṇa* differently:

किञ्चिद्धि प्रमाणेनोपलब्धम् तद् अनुकरणम् इति ।

AbhiBhā p. 5

Representation indeed, can be said to be only something perceived by some means of cognition.

The phenomenon of imitation qualifies → *citra* (painting) as well as *nṛtya* (dance) in the **Viṣṇudharmottara Purāṇa**:

यथा नृत्ते तथा चित्रे त्रैलोक्यानुकृतिः स्मृता ॥

VDhPur III.35.5cd

The imitation of (all) the three worlds is said to be in dance, so also in painting. (Tr. R.V. Tripathi)

Thus, the validity of *śilpa* and the allied arts of which it is an essential part rests in their being a *prati-rūpa* (counterpart) of the original, as was stated in the **Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa**. *Śilpa* is essentially an *anukṛti* of the 'divine'. The arts relate the counterpart to the original and integrate the two. *Śilpa* and the allied arts are thus links in a chain whereby the real which is also supra-sensual is brought to the level of the cognized form, and this entire exercise of bringing forth the unmanifest into manifest, endowed with *lakṣaṇa* (cognizance) and *pramāṇa* (proportions) depends crucially on *anukaraṇa* (imitation).

In the Vedic context of *śilpa* we find that creation, an act of *śilpa*, is often divine; it is also a sacrifice. When, by implication, through *śilpa*, the objects assume a corporeality it amounts to their being only a counterpart of something or someone original and unmanifest. The significance of *śilpa* (and of allied arts) lies in its propensity in manifesting the phenomenal objects in the image of their divine original which exists unseen. The sublimity of *śilpa* is thus understood as a secondary manifestation, a counterpart, an image of the original. And in its being a secondary manifestation perhaps also lie the seeds of its eventual devaluation! But, at least in the Vedic view, the essence of a thing, e.g. sound in music, gestures in dance, form in plastic art, could be of different kinds, but everywhere the in-dwelling spirit of these different manifestations is unseen: *śilpa* makes it manifest or cognizable by *anukaraṇa*, a quality that it eventually passed on to drama, poetics, dance and music.

Classification

Anukaraṇa (imitation) in *śilpa* is significant also as a principle which introduced differentiations, for it interprets the very basis of classification in the *śilpas*. Other differentiations also applied to *śilpa* according to the variety of activity involved: mental or manual. First about the classification mentioned in Sāyaṇa's commentary on the **Aitareya Brāhmaṇa** (VI.27) which follows:

शिल्पशब्दश्चाऽऽश्चर्यकरं कर्म ब्रूते । तच्च शिल्पं द्विविधम् – देवशिल्पं मानुषशिल्पं चेति । नाभानेदिष्टादीनि यानि शिल्पानि सन्ति, तानि देवानां प्रीतिहेतुत्वाद्देवशिल्पानि इत्युच्यन्ते, एतेषामेव देवशिल्पानामनुकृतिः सदृशरूपमिह मनुष्यलोके शिल्पमधिगम्यते प्रतीयते ।

Sāyaṇa on AitBr VI.27

Śilpa is explained as 'an act of wonder'. *Śilpa* is of two types: 'divine' and 'human'. The *śilpas* like *nābhānediṣṭha* are meant to invoke intimacy with gods, so they are divine. Their imitations, which have a 'likeness' in form are *śilpa* of the *manuṣya loka* (and consist of an elephant, a goblet, a garment, a gold object, a mule chariot, so created by a recourse to *śilpa*).

Yet another kind of differentiation may be inferred from the varying uses of the term *śilpa* in the context of actions relating to it. Seemingly, it may appear that a distinction between manual and mental skills involved in accomplishing a work of art should have led to some kind of differentiation in *śilpas* on the basis of the action involved. But the texts offer few explicit clues in this connection, for all acts, whether manual or mental, are encompassed in *śilpa*, e.g.:

एकस्यैव पदार्थस्य नानारूपप्रकल्पनम् ।

वाङ् मनः कर्मभिर्यत्तच्छिल्पमित्यभिधीयते ॥

BhPrak III.106 (Line no. 18–19)

The making or performing of one and the same thing in various forms through verbal expression (*vāk*), mind (*manas*) and action (*karman*) is called *śilpa*. (Tr. P.L. Sharma)

or:

जपो जल्पः शिल्पं सकलमपिमुद्रा विरचना ।

गतिः प्रादक्षिण्यक्रमणमशनाद्याहुतिविधिः ॥

SLah 27ab

Let my idle chatter be the muttering of prayer, my every manual movement the execution of ritual gestures, my walking a ceremonial circumambulation, my eating and other acts the rites of sacrifice. (Tr. W. Norman Brown)

Implicit in these passages are suggestions that *śilpa* was both a manual and a mental act, and also an act of the body.

One of the most significant differentiations in *śilpa* lies in its manifestation as *vr̥ttis*. We have already discussed what constituted *vr̥ttis* (occupations). *Śilpa* as *vr̥tti* was regarded as a means of livelihood exclusively reserved for *śūdras* in ancient India, e.g.:

शूद्रस्य द्विजशुश्रूषा सर्वशिल्पानि वाप्यथ ॥

AgPur 151.9cd

Service to twice-borns and all kinds of arts and crafts, these two are means of living for the *śūdras*. (Tr. R.S. Bhattacharya)

मनुष्याश्चोपजीवन्ति शिल्पं वै भूषणादिकम् ।

AgPur XVIII.41ab

Śilpa like (making of) ornaments and the like are taken by men as means of living. (Tr. R.S. Bhattacharya)

From the beginnings of the Indian tradition in the Vedic texts, where *śilpa* is extolled, to the subsequent position of its devaluation by the sixth century B.C. there is a long history which explains this contradiction. As regards their status, *śilpas* are regarded in different manner according to their context. The Buddhist texts refer to them sometimes as low and sometimes as high. The *Vinaya Piṭaka* (II.176) says:

Craft (*sippa*) means: there are two kinds of crafts: low and high craft. Low craft means: the craft of basket-makers, the potters' craft, the weavers' craft, the leather-workers' craft, the barbers' craft or whatever is disdained ... despised in these districts – that means low craft. High craft means: reckoning on fingers (*muddā*), calculation (*gaṇanā*), writing (*lekha*), what is not disdained ... what is esteemed in these districts – this means high crafts. (Tr. I.B. Horner)

But in the *Dīgha Nikāya* (op. cit) even those crafts which are regarded as 'high' in the *Vinaya*-list, are designated as *puṭhu* (ordinary). However, men of high birth are represented as practising them, which shows that in the Buddhist world-view crafts were not as stigmatized as was the case in the *Dharmaśāstras*. The Buddha is adept in *sippas*, so is the Bodhisattva Velama. The latter's story is told in the *Manorathapūraṇī* (IV.180f.) where we are told that he was born as a *purohita*'s son in Varanasi, and went later to learn crafts at Takṣaśilā (*sippa uggahanatnam*) from the *ācāryas* there. He himself became an expert in them (*sippa pūganam*) after training for sixteen years (*solasa vasssehi gahatabbam sippam*), then as an *ācārya* he trained 84,000 princes in *sippa*. In the *Majjhima Nikāya* (Trenckner, II.94) a possibility is indicated that anyone desiring to learn *śilpa* could do so provided that such an apprentice did not suffer from disabilities of body or mind. The statement is made in reference to a prince who was adept in elephant riding and in wielding the *aṅkuśa* (goad). But in tradition, represented mainly in the *Dharmaśāstras*, *śilpas* are regarded as polluting and these, as well as their practitioners, were stigmatized. In them, *śilpas* are prohibited to be practised by the higher *varṇas* except in times of emergency or *āpaddharma*.

Process

Crafts were learnt by intensive training imparted by master craftsmen to their children and disciples. The **Milinda Pañha** and the **Manorathapūraṇī** refer to the arduous aspects of this training and to the period involved in learning the crafts. The disciples sometimes came to *ācāryas* from distant regions and returned after learning the craft. This system has in it the makings of the *gharānā* system, which still operates in India in the fields of music and dance. The rules that bound an *ācārya* and his *antevāsī* (resident apprentice) are described in various texts (Misra 1982: 38–39). An *antevāsī* is defined in the Dharmaśāstra as a *karmakāra* who may come from a distant land and lodge with an *ācārya* for training. The *ācārya* who accepted an *antevāsī* was ordained to treat him like a son and provide food to him. He was supposed to impart training to such a disciple. Any dereliction from duty either on the part of the *ācārya* or on that of the *antevāsī* was a punishable offence (*ibid.*). The *antevāsī* was supposed to give to his *ācārya* whatever he earned during the period of his apprenticeship, and *dakṣiṇā* after the training was over. The **Manorathapūraṇī** similarly refers to the practice of offering *dakṣiṇā* to the *ācārya* by the disciple:

आचारियं दानं परियेसिस्सन्तिति अञ्चथिया हि यस्य सन्तिके सिप्पं उगगहंति, तस्स सिप्पुगहणतो पुरे वा पच्छा वा अन्तरन्तर वा गहेतो निहरित्वा धनं देन्ति ।

Manorathapūraṇī V.86

As an endowment satisfies a teacher, so a disciple should bring money from home and give it to the *ācārya* from whom he is receiving the training in *śilpa* (either) before the start (of training) or in the middle (of his training) or after (the training is over).
(Tr. R.V. Tripathi)

Sometimes the states ran workshops to impart such training under the guidance of an *āveśanin* (Misra 1975: 20). *Āveśanins* find mention in a Sanchi inscription and elsewhere as sculptors (Misra 1975: 20), while *antevāsīs* figure in the inscription of the pre-Christian era, e.g., the Yakṣa and Yakṣī sculptures from Parkham and Jhing Ka Nagla in the Mathura Museum which respectively carry the following inscriptions:

निभद पूगे राज अथ ... पि कुणिकान्तेवासिना गोमित केन कटा ।

In the guild of (Maṇi)bhadra (in the reign of) the king ... made by Gomitaka, the pupil of Kuṇika. (Tr. R.C. Sharma)

स पुतेहि कारिते यखि लयाव कुणि काते (वासिना नाके) ने कटा ।

(This image of) Yakṣī Layāva has been caused to be made by the sons of Sa, and made by Naka, a pupil of Kuṇika. (Tr. R.C. Sharma)

These two inscriptions provide incontrovertible evidence of the *gharāṇā* system operating as early as the pre-Christian era, roughly around the Mauryan period, in the Mathura region.

Conclusion

Śilpa thus, in Indian tradition, has multiple meanings, and is composed of concepts which qualify creation in some of its most sublime as well as cosmological senses. But an ambivalence in regard to its exalted or subservient status is often underscored in ancient texts. *Śilpa* also designated arts, including the sculptural art. Through *pramāṇa*, *lakṣaṇa*, and *anukaraṇa*, and by inducing *sādṛśya* does *śilpa* arrest limitless forms which lie in the differentiation of *nāma-rūpa*, and there lies the quality of *śilpa*. *Śilpa* is related to form and sometimes it is even where form is not; hence the *manomayī pratimā* (Indumati Misra: 74) and hence the statement that *śilpa* liberates, or that *śilpa-siddhi* emancipates its practitioner from the cycle of birth and rebirth:

नहि जन्मान्तरं तस्य शिल्पसिद्धिर्भवेत्तथा ।

शिल्पविद्या सदा श्रेष्ठा सर्वदानन्ददायिका ॥

ŚiPrak II.730

By the attainment of mastery in art (*śilpa-siddhi*) he has not to undergo another birth. The knowledge of art (*śilpa-vidyā*) is always excellent and bestows all bliss. (Tr. A. Boner)

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